

Embracing Principles

Seeing the Connection
between verses

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قواعد العناق

لمعرفة ما بين الآيات من التناسب و الإشتياق

Embracing Principles: Seeing the Connection between Verses

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Introduction

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His aid and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of ourselves and our actions. Whosoever is guided by Allah cannot be misguided by another, and whosoever is misguided by Allah cannot be guided by any other. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, without partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ (١٢٩)

“O you who believe, be mindful of Allah, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment.”¹

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَوَضَعُوا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ ۖ وَعَنْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمَا ذَكَرُوا ۚ وَالَّذِي تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْغُيُوبُ ۚ وَالَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۚ وَالَّذِي عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ﴾ (١٥٠)
﴿وَيْسَاءُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَنْصَابُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَرِيبًا﴾ (١٥١)

“O people, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them spread countless men and women far and wide; be mindful of Allah, in whose

1 Ā l-‘Imrān: 102

name you make requests of one another. Beware of severing the ties of kinship: Allah is always watching over you.”²

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا﴾

“O you who believe, be mindful of Allah, speak in a direct fashion and to good purpose, and He will put your deeds right for you and forgive you your sins. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will truly achieve a great triumph.”³

To proceed: The most truthful of speech is the Book of Allah, and the best of guidance is that of Muhammad (ﷺ). The worst of affairs are the newly invented matters, and every newly invented matter is an innovation, every innovation is a misguidance, and every misguidance leads to the Fire.

Often, as I read the Qur’an, I am confounded by verses which seem to have no apparent link to the verses before it. This makes me question why these verses are mentioned in this order. An example of this is the verse towards the end of *Sūrah al-Shūrā* that is mentioned in the context of the punishment of the disbelievers on the Day of Judgement,

﴿يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنثَاهُ وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذَّكَرَ﴾

“He grants female offspring to whoever He will, male to whoever He will.”⁴

Another example is the final verse of *Sūrah al-Nisā’* that is about

2 Al-Nisā’: 1

3 Al-Aḥzāb: 70-71

4 Al-Shūrā: 49

the inheritance of brothers but is mentioned in the context of establishing Allah's oneness in worship,

﴿قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ﴾

*"Say, 'Allah gives you a ruling about inheritance from someone who dies childless with no surviving parents...'"*⁵

A third example is towards the end of *Sūrah al-Naḥl* wherein this verse is mentioned in the context of the Prophet Ibrāhīm's monotheism,

﴿إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ﴾

*"The Sabbath was made obligatory only for those who differed about it..."*⁶

There is hardly a *sūrah* except that within it you will find verses which make you pause and question their relevance to the previous verses. However, on further reflection, you find the beauty of their relevance in this context.

The Science of Inter-Relation (*Munāsabah*)

Irrespective of how many topics are discussed within a *sūrah*, it is in reality all linked from beginning to end. All aspects of the *sūrah* speak to a main theme and all parts of it are thus connected to that one theme.⁷ Therefore, each verse connects with the verse before

5 Al-Nisā': 176

6 Al-Naḥl: 124

7 See *Al-Muwāfaqāt* of Al-Shāṭibī, vol. 3, pp. 412-420 and *Al-Naba' al-'Aẓīm*, p. 159

and after it. The verses link together in amazing harmony, as eloquent speech is always connected. To contemplate these links in the Qur'an brings great benefits and allows multiple meanings to become apparent. Indeed, many of the subtler points of the Qur'an are contained in these links and connections.

Whoever contemplates and reflects upon the beauty of the ordering of any *sūrah* in the Book of Allah, will know for certainty that just as the Qur'an is miraculous in its words, meanings and eloquence, it is also miraculous in its order of verses. Thus, the Science of Inter-Relation stands at the pinnacle of ascertaining this. Its relationship to *tafsīr* is similar to the relationship of eloquence to Arabic grammar. It is from the amazing aspects of revelation.

Subtle *Tafsīr*

The Science of Inter-Relation has a strong connection to that of subtle *tafsīr*. Subtle *tafsīr* is where the reader of the Qur'an through contemplation arrives at subtle yet powerful meanings, whilst affirming the apparent meaning.

‘Alī hinted to subtle *tafsīr* when he was asked, “Do you have knowledge of what is in the Qur'an that others do not have?” He replied, “By the One who split the seed and created man, we only have what is in the Qur'an except for the understanding that Allah gives to a person about the Qur'an.”⁸

Allah says,

﴿إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّمُتَوَسِّمِينَ﴾

8 Collected by Al-Bukhārī, no. 3047

“There truly is a sign in this for those who can learn.”⁹

This refers to those who think and ponder, and have understanding and insight. Similar to this is the supplication the Prophet (ﷺ) made for Ibn ‘Abbās, “O Allah, grant him understanding of the religion and teach him the Book.”¹⁰

Subtle *tafsīr* is similar to metaphors. An example of this is found in the understanding of ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Abbās that *Sūrah al-Naṣr*’s revelation was a sign of the coming death of the Prophet (ﷺ). Ibn Ḥajar said, “This shows the permissibility of explaining the Qur’an using subtle references, and this is possible for the one whose feet are firmly grounded in knowledge, which is why ‘Alī said, ‘...except for the understanding that Allah gives to a person about the Qur’an.’”¹¹

Ibn al-Qayyim said, “Subtle references are similar to evidences and signs. It comes from a purity which allows the senses and mind to become aware of subtle points.”¹² Ibn al-Qayyim further stated, “I heard Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah say, ‘...the correct type is what the wording subtly refers to which makes sense.’”

An example of this would be the statement of Allah,

﴿لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ﴾^(٧٩)

“That only the purified can touch.”¹³

Ibn Taymiyyah commented, “The correct understanding of

9 Al-Ḥijr: 75

10 Collected by Al-Bukhārī, no. 75

11 *Fath al-Bārī*: vol. 8, p. 736

12 *Al-Madārij*: vol. 2, p. 416

13 Al-Wāqī‘ah: 79

the verse is that it refers to the scrolls handled by the angels... However, the verse also points to not touching the Qur'an except in a state of ritual purity."

Another example is the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ), "The angels do not enter into a house where there are dogs or pictures." Ibn Taymiyyah said, "If the angels do not enter into a house where there are dogs and pictures, then how can the knowledge of Allah, love for Him, remembrance of Him and being close to Him exist in a heart full of the hounds of desires?"¹⁴

Ibn Taymiyyah further stated, "These subtle references are like the jurists using analogies, considerations and understandings of the implicit using the explicit, in extrapolating rulings. However, in this case, it is for bringing hope, fear and recommended deeds... If the subtle reference is from correct analogy then it is good and acceptable."¹⁵ He also said, "This is true so long as the analogy is correct and not corrupt, and the consideration is upright and not crooked."¹⁶

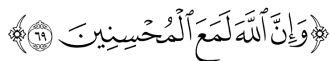
In order for subtle *tafsīr* to be considered, the following conditions must be met:

1. It must affirm the apparent meaning of the verse.
2. The subtle meaning cannot contradict the apparent meaning so as to devoid the verse of its purpose.
3. The interpretation cannot be farfetched or corrupt, the way some do in the verse,

14 *Al-Madārij*: vol. 2, pp. 416-418

15 *Al-Majmū'*: vol. 6, p. 377

16 *Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 28



“Allah is with those who do good.”¹⁷

They claim that ‘la ma’ comes from ‘lam‘ān’ which means to glisten and shine.

4. The subtle meaning cannot oppose the *sharī’ah* or sound intellect.
5. The subtle meaning must be something supported by the *sharī’ah*.
6. It is not obligatory to accept the subtle meaning but it is good to do so.

Thus, every verse is closely linked to the verses around it, the way in which two people become connected when they tightly embrace. This close connection between verses may not always be apparent. The reader knows that this connection exists but cannot arrive at it. It is for this reason that I authored this treatise so as to clarify the principles which make the connection clear between each verse with the verses before and after it. By Allah’s permission, applying these principles makes the connection apparent. By practising these principles, the reader gains the ability to make out the connection between verses.

This is why the book is entitled, *Embracing Principles: Seeing the Connection between Verses*. To embrace is to hug, and the embracing principles cover the rules by which someone who contemplates the Qur’an can arrive at the close embrace between verses. This is to such an extent that if you were to pause at the end of one verse, it would almost cry out to be embraced by the following verse.

¹⁷ Al-‘Ankabūt: 69

I ask Allah, the Most High, to make this effort sincerely for His Noble Face, and to forgive the author, his parents and the reader. Indeed, He is the Best of those asked and the Most Generous of those from whom we hope.

‘Adnān ‘Abdul-Qādir

Ramadan, 1426 AH

Chapter One

Learning the Details of an Abridged Story

At times, stories are mentioned briefly. Not knowing the full details of the story makes it hard to arrive at the connection between its accompanying verses.

1. *Sūrah al-Baqarah* & The Changing of the *Qiblah*

The topic of the changing of the *qiblah* from Bayt al-Maqdis to the Ka'bah covers a quarter of a *juz'*. In it, Allah commands that the direction of prayer be changed, beginning with the verse,

﴿سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

*“The foolish people will say, ‘What has turned them away from the prayer direction they used to face.’”*¹⁸

Verses that seem to have no relation to the changing of the *qiblah* are then mentioned. Allah says,

¹⁸ Al-Baqarah: 142

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۖ﴾

“We have made you into a just community, so that you may bear witness before others...”¹⁹

﴿وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ﴾

“Those who were given the Scripture know with certainty that this is the Truth from their Lord...”²⁰

﴿لَعَلَّآ يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ ۖ﴾

“...so that people may have no argument against you...”²¹

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ﴾

“O you who believe, seek help through steadfastness and prayer...”²²

﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۚ﴾

“We shall certainly test you with fear and hunger, and loss of property, lives and crops...”²³

19 Al-Baqarah: 143

20 Al-Baqarah: 144

21 Al-Baqarah: 150

22 Al-Baqarah: 153

23 Al-Baqarah: 155

﴿إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ﴾

“Ṣafā and Marwah are among the rites of Allah...”²⁴

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ﴾

“As for those who hide the proofs and guidance We send down, after We have made them clear to the people in the Scripture...”²⁵

Allah then says,

﴿وَالْهُكْمُ إِلَهٌُ وَحْدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

“Your God is the one God, there is none worthy of worship except Him, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.”²⁶

What is the connection between all these verses?

Whoever reads the signs that the People of the Scripture had concerning the prophethood of the Messenger (ﷺ), as well as the chaos the Jewish tribes caused when the *qiblah* was changed from Bayt al-Maqdis to the Ka’bah, will realise the connection between these verses. The explanation of this is as follows:

The prayer is one of the greatest symbols of *tawhīd*, and the House built by Ibrāhīm is the symbol of servitude to Allah upon earth, so take it as your direction of prayer instead of the direction faced by the Jews. However, you will face a severe attack from the

24 Al-Baqarah: 158

25 Al-Baqarah: 159

26 Al-Baqarah: 163

foolish amongst the People of the Scripture,

﴿سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

“The foolish people will say, ‘What has turned them away from the prayer direction they used to face.’”²⁷

Then be patient upon the truth you have, for you are a just and balanced nation that combined between the two *qiblahs*, as was prophesised in the Scriptures,

﴿وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ﴾

“Those who were given the Scripture know with certainty that this is the Truth from their Lord...”²⁸

On the Day of Judgement, you will testify that the Prophet (ﷺ) brought these signs and that his opponents rejected these prophetic signs. Therefore, hold onto your new direction of prayer, because if you renege on this, then they will claim that the signs of the Prophet (ﷺ) are false,

﴿لَعَلَّايَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ﴾

“...so that people may have no argument against you...”²⁹

Your opponents won't just stop here, but will prepare to fight you and become your enemies, so you too be prepared by seeking

27 Al-Baqarah: 142

28 Al-Baqarah: 144

29 Al-Baqarah: 150

divine assistance through...

﴿بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ﴾

“...steadfastness and prayer...”³⁰

Know that the believer is always tested with fear, hardship and harm, especially from some of the People of the Scripture. They know with certainty from their Scriptures that one of the signs of the Prophet (ﷺ) will be changing the direction of prayer to the Ka’bah, the place where Şafā and Marwah are also found,

﴿إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ﴾

“Şafā and Marwah are among the rites of Allah...”³¹

However, they conceal this,

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ﴾

“As for those who hide the proofs and guidance We send down...”³²

Hold onto the Ka’bah, your new *qiblah*, a symbol of monotheism and the worship of Allah alone,

﴿وَالْهُكْمُ إِلَهُ وَحْدٌ﴾

30 Al-Baqarah: 153

31 Al-Baqarah: 158

32 Al-Baqarah: 159

“Your God is the one God...”³³

In this there is an increase of love of Allah for you. The love of Allah is the nourishment of the soul,

﴿وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ﴾

“...but the believers have greater love for Allah.”³⁴

Thus, by knowing the detailed story of the change of the *qiblah* – in particular, the signs it contains of the prophethood of the Messenger (ﷺ) as mentioned in the previous Scriptures – the connection between these verses can be easily seen.

2. *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* & The Story of Isrā’īl

Allah says,

﴿لَنْ يَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا حُبُّوا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ كُلُّ الشَّعَامِ
كَانَ حِلًّا لِبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَءِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ ﴿٣٥﴾﴾

“None of you will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish: whatever you give, Allah knows about it very well. All food was lawful to the Children of Israel before the Torah was revealed, except for what Isrā’īl made unlawful for himself...”³⁵

How are these two verses connected?

In order to ascertain this connection, we must know the details of

33 Al-Baqarah: 163

34 Al-Baqarah: 165

35 Āl-‘Imrān: 92-93

what Isrā'il made unlawful for himself. The Prophet of Allah Isrā'il, which is another name for the Prophet Ya'qūb, became severely ill for a long period of time. He took an oath that if Allah cured him, he would make unlawful upon himself the food and drink most beloved to him as an act of gratitude. This was something permissible for him to do in his *sharī'ah* but impermissible for us to do in ours. The Prophet Ya'qūb's favourite food was camel meat and his favourite drink was camel milk; so he made both of them unlawful for himself.

Therefore, we take from Isrā'il's act of sacrifice a principle. The principle being that a person cannot attain the highest of levels in Allah's sight, until they sacrifice what they love and are attached to most. For example, spending from what you love and desire as Allah says,

﴿وَأَنفِقْ أَلْمَالِ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ﴾

*"...who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it..."*³⁶

And He says,

﴿وَيُطْعَمُونَ أَلطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ﴾

*"And they give food in spite of love for it..."*³⁷

And here, Allah says,

36 Al-Baqarah: 177

37 Al-Insān: 8

﴿لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَۚ﴾

“None of you will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish.”³⁸

Therefore, this is the significance of mentioning the story of Isrā’īl³⁹ here after the verse,

﴿لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَۚ﴾

“None of you will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish.”⁴⁰

3. *Sūrah al-Kahf* & The Story of Iblīs

In *Sūrah al-Kahf*, Allah briefly mentions the story of Iblīs,

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِۚ﴾

“When We said to the angels, ‘Bow down before Adam’, and they all bowed down, but not Iblīs, he was one of the jinn and he disobeyed his Lord’s command.”⁴¹

What is the relevance of this verse with what comes before it; the story of the man with the two gardens?

38 Āl-‘Imrān: 9

39 See *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*

40 Āl-‘Imrān: 92

41 Al-Kahf: 50

Whoever reads the complete story of Iblīs knows that he refused to obey Allah’s command and was haughty,

﴿أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَفُكُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾﴾

“Are you too high and mighty?”⁴²

Iblīs was proud of his origins and belittled Adam’s origins which were from clay,

﴿إِنِّي أَنَا سَاجِدٌ لِمَن خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ﴿٧٦﴾﴾

“Why should I bow down to someone You have created from clay?”⁴³

Iblīs further stated,

﴿خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿٧٧﴾﴾

“You made me from fire and him from clay.”⁴⁴

He therefore saw smokeless fire as being better than moulded clay,

﴿قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ أَكُنْ لَّأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِن صَالِبٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴿٧٨﴾﴾

“And he answered, ‘I will not bow down to a mortal You created from

42 Šād: 75

43 Al-Isrā’: 61

44 Šād: 76

dried clay, formed from dark mud.”⁴⁵

This was the cause of Iblīs’ misguidance. Arrogance of lineage is a trial which can afflict the one calling to Allah, and at times, can be the cause of their misguidance, especially if that individual criticises the lineage of others.

Hence, the relevance of the story of Iblīs being mentioned in this *sūrah* becomes apparent, as this *sūrah* speaks of the six trials faced by people. The first of those trials is oppression as mentioned in the story of the people of the cave. The second trial is the love of being associated with nobility and looking down upon the poor,

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ﴾

“Content yourself with those who pray to their Lord...”⁴⁶

The third trial is one of desires as found in the story of the man with the two gardens. The fourth trial is arrogance in lineage, exemplified in the story of Iblīs. The fifth trial is knowledge as shown in the story of Mūsā and Khidr, and being tempted by power is the sixth trial as found in the story of Dhul-Qarnayn.

Thus, by knowing the detailed stories, you can determine the connection between verses.

45 Al-Hijr: 33

46 Al-Kahf: 28

Chapter Two

Knowing the Causes of Revelation

Knowing the causes of revelation is another way to help determine the connection between verses.

1. *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* & The Verse of Usury

Allah says concerning the Battle of Uḥud,

﴿وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ ۖ﴾

“Remember when you left your home at dawn to assign battle positions to the believers.”⁴⁷

Allah then says after this,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي بَدَلْتُمْ بِهَا أَنفُسَكُمْ ۖ أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً ۖ﴾

47 Āl-‘Imrān: 121

“O you who believe, do not consume usurious interest, doubled and redoubled.”⁴⁸

What is the connection?

During the Battle of Uḥud, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) face was injured and his tooth broken. Seventy of his Companions were martyred including Ḥamzah who was also mutilated. The Prophet (ﷺ) made *du’ā* against Quraysh so Allah revealed the verse,

﴿لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾﴾

“Whether Allah repents upon them or punishes them is not for you to decide: they are wrongdoers.”⁴⁹

Some of the Companions had said, “If we ever have a day of victory over the polytheists, we will do worse to them.”⁵⁰ This is why Allah says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ مَصَافًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بَدْعُ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُّضَعَفٌ ۚ﴾

“O you who believe, do not consume usurious interest, doubled and redoubled.”⁵¹

If usury is impermissible in wealth so that a person cannot take

48 Āl-‘Imrān: 130

49 Āl-‘Imrān: 128

50 Collected by ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad in *Al-Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 135, and Al-Tirmidhī no. 3129, and Al-Ḥākim, vol. 2, p. 359. It was declared sound (*ḥasan*) by Al-Tirmidhī and authenticated by Al-Ḥākim and Al-Albānī. See *Al-Silsilah al-Ḍa‘īfah*, vol. 2, p. 29

51 Āl-‘Imrān: 130

a coin extra in usury, then what about blood? How can you kill more people and in a worse manner than what happened at Uḥud? This is a usury doubled and redoubled in blood, which is why Allah says,

﴿لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً﴾⁵²

*“...do not consume usurious interest, doubled and redoubled.”*⁵²

Therefore, by knowing the cause of revelation, we understand the connection.

2. *Sūrah al-Nisā’* & Committing Murder Due to Doubts

Allah says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا صُرِّتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ آمَنَ إِلَيْكُمْ
السَّلَامَ أَنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

*“So, you who believe, be careful when you go to fight in Allah’s way, and do not say to someone who offers you a greeting of peace, ‘You are not a believer...’”*⁵³

The above verse comes after the following verse,

﴿وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهُنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا﴾

“If anyone kills a believer deliberately, the punishment for him is

52 Ibid

53 Al-Nisā’: 94

Hell, and there he will remain.”⁵⁴

What is the connection between the two verses?

Ibn ‘Abbās narrated, “Some Muslims came across a man collecting the spoils of war. He said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ They killed him and took his spoils of war. Allah revealed the verse,

﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْفَقَ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ لَسْتُمْ مُؤْمِنَاتَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾

“...and do not say to someone who offers you a greeting of peace, ‘You are not a believer’ out of desire for the chance gains of this life...”⁵⁵

In another narration they said to one another, “He only gave the *salāms* to save himself.”⁵⁶ Allah warns from killing a believer based on some doubt or desire. Whoever kills someone based on this is the same as the one who kills a believer intentionally. The consequence of such a murder is to remain in Hellfire. This is why the two verses are mentioned together and it is an example of how the cause of revelation can help ascertain the connection.

3. *Sūrah al-An’ām* & Expelling the Believers

Allah says in *Sūrah al-An’ām*,

﴿وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ﴾

“Do not drive away those who call upon their Lord morning and

54 Al-Nisā’: 93

55 Collected by Al-Bukhārī, no. 4591 & Muslim, no. 3025

56 Collected by Aḥmad, vol. 1, p. 229

evening, seeking nothing but His Face.”⁵⁷

Allah then says,

﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِي الرِّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَن
عَمِلَ مِنكُمْ سُوءًا إِجْهَالًا لَّمْ يَتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّهُ يَغْفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

“When those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say, ‘Peace be upon you. Your Lord has taken it on Himself to be merciful: if any of you has foolishly done a bad deed, and afterwards repented and mended his ways, Allah is most forgiving and most merciful.’”⁵⁸

What is the relevance here of Allah specifying the believers as,

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنكُمْ سُوءًا إِجْهَالًا﴾

“...if any of you has foolishly done a bad deed...”⁵⁹

Why the specification here when we know that if the disbelievers do evil, and then repent to Allah, Allah will forgive them and have mercy upon them. Forgiveness and mercy are not just specific to the poor believers.

In the narration of Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, he said, “There were six of us with the Prophet (ﷺ). The polytheists said to the Prophet (ﷺ), ‘Remove them so that they do not offend us.’ It was myself, Ibn Mas‘ūd, a man from Hudhayl, Bilāl and two men whom I shall not name. The Prophet (ﷺ) thought whatever Allah wished him to think, so Allah revealed,

57 Al-An’ām: 52

58 Al-An’ām: 54

59 Ibid

﴿وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ﴾⁶⁰

“Do not drive away those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking nothing but His Face.”⁶⁰

‘Ikrimah narrated, “‘Utbah ibn Rabī‘ah, Shaybah ibn Rabī‘ah, Muṭ‘im ibn ‘Adiyy, Al-Ḥārith ibn Nawfal and others from the disbelieving noblemen of Banū ‘Abd Manāf came to Abū Ṭālib and said, ‘If your nephew were to expel our free slaves and slaves, it would have a greater impact on us and we would be more willing to follow him and believe in him.’ Abū Ṭālib approached the Prophet (ﷺ) and informed him of their statement. ‘Umar remarked, ‘Why don’t you do so, that we may see what they want and where our discussions reach?’ Allah then revealed this verse, and ‘Umar upon hearing it apologised for his statement.”⁶¹

Thus, whoever amongst the believers supported the position of the disbelievers in expelling the poor and weak Muslims, due to a desire and hope of the disbelievers accepting Islam, then repents from this, Allah will forgive them. Therefore, the first verse was revealed concerning the poor believers, and the second verse was concerning the believers who supported the position of the disbelievers. Knowing the cause of revelation helps to connect the verses.

60 Collected by Muslim, no. 2413

61 Collected by Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 7, p. 202, from ‘Ikrimah as a *mursal* narration (i.e. when the narrator does not mention the name of the person from whom he heard the story)

Chapter Three

Knowing the Events Surrounding Revelation

If there is no clear cause of revelation for a verse, then knowing the events surrounding the revelation that the verses were revealed about is helpful in determining the connection between those verses.

1. The Ending of *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* & The People of the Scripture

Allah mentions the fate of the martyrs, and in particular, those martyred at Uḥud,

﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾﴾

“Do not think of those who have been killed in Allah’s way as dead. They are alive with their Lord, well provided for.”⁶²

62 Āl-‘Imrān: 169

After then mentioning the Battle of Ḥamrā' al-Asad that followed it, Allah goes onto mention the People of the Scripture, their disbelief and their unworthy characteristics,

﴿وَلَا يَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِينَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْكُفْرِ﴾

*“Do not be grieved by those who are quick to disbelieve.”*⁶³

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا﴾

*“Those who sell their faith for disbelief will not harm Allah in any way...”*⁶⁴

﴿وَلَا يَحْسِنَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُمْ﴾

*“Those who are miserly with what Allah has granted them out of His grace should not think that it is good for them...”*⁶⁵

Allah then says,

﴿لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الْبَغِيَّةِ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُمِبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ لَوْلَا ذُنُوبُكُمْ لَقَدْ مَسَّ اللَّهُ قَوْمَ الْفَالِغِ﴾

﴿يَعْرِضُ﴾

*“Allah has certainly heard the words of those who sneer, ‘So Allah is poor, while we are rich’. We shall record everything they say – as well as their killing of Prophets in defiance of all that is right...”*⁶⁶

63 Āl-‘Imrān: 176

64 Āl-‘Imrān: 177

65 Āl-‘Imrān: 180

66 Āl-‘Imrān: 181

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا نُوْحٍ رَسُولٌ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ بِنَافِثَةٍ أَكْبَرُ إِنَّكَ لَفِ
قَدْ جَاءَكَ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قَبْلِي يَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِالَّذِي قُلْتُمْ قَوْمَهُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾

“To those who say, ‘Allah has commanded us not to believe in any messenger unless he brings us an offering that fire [from heaven] consumes,’ say, ‘Messengers before me have come to you with clear signs, including the one you mention. If you are sincere, why did you kill them?’”⁶⁷

Then what is the connection between the verses speaking of the fate of the martyrs of Uḥud and Ḥamrā’ al-Asad and the People of the Book?

Reading the complete story of the Battle of Uḥud allows you to make the connection between these verses. After the Battle of Badr, Ka’b ibn al-Ashraf, a leader of a Jewish tribe went to the Quraysh, encouraging them to fight the Muslims. The Quraysh prepared their army and set out to fight in the Battle of Uḥud. At the same time, the hypocrites under the leadership of ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, showed their true colours and turned back with a third of the Muslim army. It is in this context that Allah mentions these verses so as to expose them, and in particular, those Jews who claim to call to Allah, His Scriptures and Messengers,

﴿حَتَّى يَمِيزَ الْخَيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ﴾

“...to separate the good and the bad...”⁶⁸

67 Āl-‘Imrān: 183

68 Āl-‘Imrān: 179

Allah then warns them,

﴿وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾^(١٧٦)

*“A terrible torment awaits them.”*⁶⁹

﴿وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ﴾^(١٧٨)

*“A shameful torment awaits them.”*⁷⁰

﴿وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾^(١٧٧)

*“An agonising torment awaits them.”*⁷¹

﴿وَأَنَّمَا تُوفَّوْنَ أَجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ﴾

*“...and you will be paid in full only on the Day of Resurrection.”*⁷²

Allah makes clear their disgraceful behaviour and that they have done worse, for they are those who,

﴿يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ﴾

69 Āl-‘Imrān: 176

70 Āl-‘Imrān: 178

71 Āl-‘Imrān: 177

72 Āl-‘Imrān: 185

“...are quick to disbelieve.”⁷³

And they are those who,

﴿أَشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ﴾

“sell their faith for disbelief...”⁷⁴

And they are those who,

﴿يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾

“...are miserly with what Allah has granted them out of His grace...”⁷⁵

Furthermore, their evil and miserliness caused them to have the audacity of criticising Allah,

﴿قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ﴾

“They said, ‘So Allah is poor, while we are rich.’”⁷⁶

They attempted to kill their Prophets,

﴿وَقَتَّلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ﴾

73 Āl-‘Imrān: 176

74 Āl-‘Imrān: 177

75 Āl-‘Imrān: 180

76 Āl-‘Imrān: 181

“...as well as their killing of Prophets.”⁷⁷

They disregarded the covenant of Allah,

﴿وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَشْرَوْا بِهِ تَمَتًّا قَلِيلًا﴾⁷⁸

“...over their shoulders, they bartered it for a small price...”⁷⁸

They are also described as those who,

﴿وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا﴾⁷⁹

“...seek praise for things they have not done...”⁷⁹

And the list goes on. Therefore, do not be surprised or think such evil is farfetched for them. Rather, know that behind these challenges, such as the Battle of Uḥud, are hidden treasures. From these treasures is the clear distinction between the true followers of the Prophet (ﷺ) and those hypocrites who claim to believe in Allah and His Messengers. Calamities expose the hidden hypocrites amongst you as well as those hiding behind their religion such as the People of the Scripture,

﴿حَتَّى يَمِيزَ الْخَيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ﴾⁸⁰

“...to separate the good and the bad...”⁸⁰

77 Ibid

78 Āl-‘Imrān: 187

79 Āl-‘Imrān: 188

80 Āl-‘Imrān: 179

Allah’s justice is also seen through calamities. The disbeliever receives his full measure in this life as well as the worldly punishment, pain, humiliation and defeat he deserves as a result of his disbelief. Another benefit is the exposure of miserliness, whether in speech or in action,

﴿لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الْبِزْزِ قَالَ إِنْ إِلَهُهُ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَكَتُوا مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ
يَعْرِضُونَ﴾

“Allah has certainly heard the words of those who sneer, ‘So Allah is poor, while we are rich’.”⁸¹

Thus, knowing the events surrounding revelation can help to determine the connection between verses.

2. *Sūrah al-A’rāf* & The Stories of the Prophets

Sūrah al-A’rāf summarises a number of the stories of the Prophets. The story of Nūḥ is mentioned. Allah says,

﴿قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ﴾

“The prominent leaders of his people said...”⁸²

However, Allah doesn’t call them disbelievers. Whereas in the next story of the Prophet Hūd, the leaders are described as disbelievers. Allah then relates the stories of Thamūd, Lūṭ, Shu‘ayb and ends with the story of Mūsā, and within each story is something distinct. Isn’t it enough to mention a single story? Why mention all of them?

⁸¹ Āl-‘Imrān: 181

⁸² Al-A’rāf: 60

This *sūrah* is a Makkī revelation. This is why within it Allah mentions the stages of denial shown by the disbelievers to their Messengers. The Prophet (ﷺ) would experience the same. Whoever reads the Makkan period of the *sīrah* – the time period this *sūrah* was revealed in – will understand the relevance of these stories.

The first stage of denial was the claim that their Prophet was mistaken. This was before disbelieving in him and rejecting him, as seen in the story of Nūḥ. This is why Allah doesn't call their leaders disbelievers. The second stage is their disbelief and their accusing the Prophet of foolishness, as seen in the story of 'Ād with their Prophet Hūd. Next comes demanding signs and miracles and then rejecting and dismissing those signs, as displayed by Thamūd towards Ṣāliḥ. After this, they publicly display sin and evil, ignoring their Messenger, as seen in the story of Lūṭ. Finally, they threaten to expel and do harm as Madyan did with Shu'ayb.

The end result of all of these nations was destruction. However, had they believed,

﴿لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

*“...We would have showered them with blessings from the heavens and earth...”*⁸³

The evil faced by the Messengers is not just from the disbelievers of their times, but the inheritors of those former generations,

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِن بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَا أَن لَّو شَاءَ أَصْبَحُوا نَدِيبُهُمْ فَمَا لِيُبَدِّلَ عَلَيْهِم قُلُوبَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ۚ﴾

83 Al-A'raf: 96

preserve unity amongst his nation and ensure leadership amongst them.

The *sūrah* begins with the story of the people of the cave. This signals to the Prophet (ﷺ) that he too will one day seek shelter in a cave; the Cave of Thawr, spending three nights there instead of three hundred years. He will also be protected therein. He will then go onto build a mosque which would be his mosque in Madinah just as a mosque was built over the graves of the people of the cave. Maybe in this there is an indication that the Prophet's (ﷺ) grave would one day be included in his mosque. Perhaps this is why he warned us against taking his grave as a place of worship, and on his deathbed warned against worshipping graves.

The story of the people of the cave indicated to him that he would be accompanied on his migration journey by his sincere companions. Therefore, do not rely upon the nobility amongst the disbelievers and ignore your poor but sincere companions,

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ﴾

“Content yourself with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening...”⁸⁶

These people are the foundation of the Islamic state. Your companions who migrated with you should not become busied with agriculture, farming and desires that preoccupy them from Allah, as happened with the man with the two gardens.

Know further that there will enter into the religion people from various tribes and differing social statuses, so beware of the ignorant call of racism or tribal superiority, whereby people take

86 Al-Kahf: 28

pride in their lineage and look down upon the lineage of others. This is what Iblīs did when he refused to prostrate to Adam. He believed his origin of fire to be better than Adam’s origin of clay,

﴿إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ﴾

“...but not Iblīs: he was one of the jinn...”⁸⁷

This type of arrogance will tear the *ummah* apart.

Thereafter, major events will take place such as disunity, killing and dishonour from some of the people of Madinah from the hypocrites and Jewish tribes. We therefore have the story of Mūsā and Khidr and the scuttling of the ship, killing of the boy and inhospitality of the villagers. These events though seeming to be harmful contain great benefits for the *da’wah* and the Islamic state.

Allah will then allow you to conquer the east and west, and all in between them. He will give you power as He gave to Dhul-Qarnayn. By holding onto this religion, this *ummah* will build a fortified wall against the spread of evil, just as Dhul-Qarnayn built a wall to contain Ya’jūj and Ma’jūj. However, when the *ummah* neglects this wall by neglecting Allah’s boundaries and *tawhīd*, the wall will collapse,

﴿جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ﴾

“...He will raze this barrier to the ground...”⁸⁸

87 Al-Kahf: 50

88 Al-Kahf: 98

Evil will then become widespread and Allah's promise will come,

﴿وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا﴾

“...and then the Trumpet will be blown and We shall gather them all together.”⁸⁹

Thus, knowing the events surrounding revelation can help to determine the connection between verses.

⁸⁹ Al-Kahf: 99

Chapter Four

Other Passages in the Qur'an Make the Connection Clear

The best method of interpreting the Qur'an is with the Qur'an. This is why when the connection between verses is unclear, you will find its relevance elsewhere in the Qur'an.

1. *Sūrah al-Furqān* & The Station of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Allah mentions how the disbelievers belittled the status of the Prophet (ﷺ) in *Sūrah al-Furqān*,

﴿وَلَمَّا رَأَوْكَ إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوءًا هَٰذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا ۖ إِن كَادَ لِيُضِلَّنَا عَنْ آلِهَتِنَا﴾

*“Whenever they see you they ridicule you: ‘Is this the one Allah sent as a Messenger?’ He might almost have led us astray from our gods...”*⁹⁰

Allah defended him by saying,

90 Al-Furqān: 41-42

﴿وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ حِينَ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ٤٢﴾

“When they see the punishment, they will know who is furthest from the path.”⁹¹

Allah then says,

﴿إِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ٤٣﴾

“They are just like cattle – no, they are further from the path.”⁹²

We then have verses that seem disconnected from what preceded,

﴿الْوَيْلَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسُ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا ٤٤﴾

﴿إِنَّا نَقْضُهَا يُبَيِّرًا ٤٥﴾

“Do you not see how your Lord lengthens the shade? If He had willed, He could have made it stand still – We made the sun its indicator. But We gradually draw it towards Us, little by little.”⁹³

Allah then goes onto describe his universal signs from the night and day, strong winds, rain descending from the sky, bringing life back to barren earth and providing water for people. After this, Allah returns to the topic of defending the honour of the Prophet (ﷺ),

﴿وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ بَذِيرًا ٤٦﴾

91 Al-Furqān: 42

92 Al-Furqān: 44

93 Al-Furqān: 45-46

*“If it had been Our will, We would have sent a warner to every town.
So do not give in to the disbelievers...”*⁹⁴

What then is the relevance of mentioning the signs in Allah’s creation in the midst of verses defending the honour of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

The one whose heart is heedless is unable to discern greatness within others, even if the signs are clear and apparent. Such a person is blind to the light of prophethood visible in the face of the Prophet (ﷺ). He is also blind to the truthfulness and purity of the Prophet (ﷺ) in his life and dealings. Those with blind hearts possess evil character and ignoble speech; they often ridicule great leaders,

﴿وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِن يَخَذُوكَ إِلَّا هُزُوءًا﴾

*“Whenever they see you they ridicule you...”*⁹⁵

Such people are led by their desires. They do not hear nor understand,

﴿إِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا﴾

*“They are just like cattle – no, they are further from the path.”*⁹⁶

Those blind to guidance live in the shadows. They fear the bright light that illuminates the path of goodness and salvation,

94 Al-Furqān: 51-52

95 Al-Furqān: 41

96 Al-Furqān: 44

and distinguishes it from the path of evil. Thus, they cannot discern between truth and falsehood, and are disgraced. You, O Messenger of Allah, are like the light of the sun. Your rays exposed the disbelievers, for shadows which are not real. Your prophetic light unveiled their ignorance, evil and corruption upon the earth that has become widespread,

﴿فَجَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا ۝﴾

“We made the sun its indicator.”⁹⁷

The more your prophethood and the truth become apparent, the more their doubts are removed and their evil repelled, just as shade disappears as the sun rises,

﴿ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا ۝﴾

“But We gradually draw it towards Us, little by little.”⁹⁸

The opposite is also true. Those blind to your prophethood are treading upon a dark path, as dark as the pitch blackness of the night, full of confusion, doubts and bewilderment,

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ۝﴾

“And it is He who has made the night for you as clothing...”⁹⁹

Their path is broken and will not take them to their destination.

97 Al-Furqān: 45

98 Al-Furqān: 46

99 Al-Furqān: 47

Whereas you, O Messenger of Allah, are like the sun to the world. What you brought is like rain that brings joy and happiness, glad tidings, mercy and it cleanses. Your message gives life to the soul and waters the thirsty spirits,

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا ۝۱۰۹ لِنُخْطِيَ بِهِ بِهِ أَيْدِيَنَا وَمِنْهُ نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا الْعُثْمَانُ﴾

﴿وَأَنَّا سِ كَثِيرًا ۝۱۱۰﴾

“...and We send down from the sky pure water. That We may bring to life thereby a dead land and give it as drink to those We created of numerous livestock and men.”¹⁰⁰

We have honoured you, O Messenger of Allah, by revealing to you that which gives life to the hearts and by making you a warner. You are not just a warner to your people as other prophets were, but to all of mankind. This is something specific and special for you and not for the other prophets. Had We willed, We could have sent you to only a specific nation as was the case with previous prophets. However, We made you a prophet for all,

﴿وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَذِيرًا ۝۱۱۱﴾

“And if We had willed, We could have sent into every city a warner,”¹⁰¹

Therefore, be with Allah and He will be with you,

﴿فَلَا تُطِيعُوا الْكُفْرِينَ وَجَاهِدُوا بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا ۝۱۱۲﴾

100 Al-Furqān: 48-49

101 Al-Furqān: 51

“So do not obey the disbelievers, and strive against them with the Qur’an a great striving.”¹⁰²

The aforementioned is found elsewhere in the Qur’an, and this helps to make the connection here. For example, Allah has likened the sending of wind, rain and bringing the earth to life with the sending of messengers and bringing hearts to life through divine revelation. Allah says in *Sūrah al-A‘rāf*,

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهَا مَن يَخْتَضِرُ وَرَحْمَةً ۖ﴾

“And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy,”¹⁰³

Allah then says,

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ﴾

“We sent Nūḥ to his people...”¹⁰⁴

In *Sūrah al-Naḥl*,

﴿وَمَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِلَّذِينَ أُخْتَلِفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦﴾﴾

“We have sent down the Scripture to you only to make clear to them what they differ about, and as guidance and mercy to those who believe.”¹⁰⁵

102 Al-Furqān: 52

103 Al-A‘rāf: 57

104 Al-A‘rāf: 59

105 Al-Naḥl: 64

Allah then says,

﴿وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۚ﴾¹⁰⁶

*“It is Allah who sends water down from the sky and with it revives the earth when it is dead.”*¹⁰⁶

As for the Prophet (ﷺ) being a guiding light, then something similar is mentioned in *Sūrah al-Şāffāt* wherein Allah takes an oath by those close to Him,

﴿وَالصَّفَّاتِ صَفًّا ۚ فَالْزَجَرَتِ زَجْرًا ۚ فَالتَّالِيَتِ ذِكْرًا ۚ﴾¹⁰⁷

*“By those [angels] ranged in rows. Who rebuke reproachfully. And recite the divine words.”*¹⁰⁷

Allah compares those close to Him as being the adornment of this life just as the stars adorn the sky,

﴿إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَكِبِ ۖ﴾¹⁰⁸

*“We have adorned the lowest heaven with stars.”*¹⁰⁸

In *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, Allah describes the Prophet (ﷺ) as a shining lamp which is the sun,

﴿إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۚ وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ۖ﴾¹⁰⁹

106 Al-Naḥl: 65

107 Al-Şāffāt: 1-3

108 Al-Şāffāt: 6

“...We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and warning. As one who calls people to Allah by His leave, as a light-giving lamp.”¹⁰⁹

Likewise, towards the end of *Sūrah al-Furqān*, the Prophet (ﷺ) is mentioned,

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

“We sent you only to give good news and warning.”¹¹⁰

The Prophet (ﷺ) is then described as a shining lamp and his followers as bright moons,

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا﴾

“Exalted is He who put constellations in the heavens, a radiant light, and an illuminating moon.”¹¹¹

Allah then says,

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا﴾

“The servants of the Lord or Mercy are those who walk humbly...”¹¹²

This is in the same *sūrah* that we are discussing. These verses are mentioned thereafter to emphasise that same point. The darkness

109 Al-Aḥzāb: 45-46

110 Al-Furqān: 56

111 Al-Furqān: 61

112 Al-Furqān: 63

of the night is compared to the darkness of disbelief in the Qur'an,

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الَّذِي اسْتَوْفَدُوا نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمٍ لَا

يُبْصِرُونَ﴾

*“They are like people who kindle a fire: when it lights up everything around them, Allah takes away all their light, leaving them in utter darkness, unable to see.”*¹¹³

And in *Sūrah al-Nūr*,

﴿أَوْ كَظُلُمٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لَّيْلِ يَعْشَى مَوْجٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهِ مَسَاحِبٌ ظَلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ

يَدَهُ أَتَىٰ بِكُلٍّ بَازٍ

*“Or like shadows in a deep sea covered by wave upon wave, with clouds above – layer upon layer of darkness – if he holds out his hand, he is scarcely able to see it.”*¹¹⁴

Thus, looking at other verses in the Qur'an can help to make the connection between the verses being studied.

2. *Sūrah Yā Sīn* & Spending

In *Sūrah Yā Sīn*, Alllah mentions a number of clear proofs establishing life after death; proofs that a living heart must accept. Thereafter, Allah says,

﴿وَأَذِّنْ لَهُمْ أَتْوَاعِبَ يُدْعَىٰ وَمَا خَلَقَكُمْ عَبَثًا وَيُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ تُرَابًا وَمَا تَدْرِي مَا يَوْمَ قِيَامٍ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ الْأَكُفُّ عَنْهُمْ فَيَسْجَدُونَ لَهَا وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الْقُبُورِ وَيُنْزِلُهُمُ اللَّهُ مُنْزَلًا وَسِيعًا فَاذْكُرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّا نَحْنُ اللَّهُ غَيْرُ مَعْبُودٍ وَإِنَّا لَكَاظِمُونَ

﴿يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ الْأَكُفُّ عَنْهُمْ فَيَسْجَدُونَ لَهَا وَيُخْرِجُهُمُ اللَّهُ مُنْزَلًا وَسِيعًا فَاذْكُرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّا نَحْنُ اللَّهُ غَيْرُ مَعْبُودٍ وَإِنَّا لَكَاظِمُونَ﴾

113 Al-Baqarah: 17

114 Al-Nūr: 40

“Yet when they are told, ‘Beware of what lies before and behind you, so that you may be given mercy. They ignore every single sign that comes to them from their Lord.’”¹¹⁵

Allah then says,

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْطَعِمُهُمْ مَنْ تَوَكَّلْنَا اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ إِنَّا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ۝﴾

“And when they are told, ‘Give to others out of what Allah has provided for you.’ The disbelievers say to the believers, ‘Why should we feed those that Allah could feed if He wanted? You must be deeply misguided.’”¹¹⁶

Allah then returns to the previous topic of establishing life after death. What then is the link between those who turn away from the clear signs and proofs and feeding others?

In *Sūrah al-Mā‘ūn*, we have an indication as the correlation between a lack of feeding others and a lack of piety. The correlation being the hardness of the heart from which disbelief and bad character towards the poor emanates. The one with a hardened heart has no spiritual life within them. Their heart is not softened by Allah’s remembrance, or by the truth or proofs just as it does not soften towards the poor and needy; a sight which should ordinarily soften the heart,

﴿أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْأَيِّنِ ۝ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ۝ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِهِ ۝﴾
 ﴿الْمُسْكِينِ ۝﴾

“Have you considered the person who denies the Judgement? It is he who pushed aside the orphan. And does not urge others to feed the

115 Yā Sīn: 45-46

116 Yā Sīn: 47

needy.”¹¹⁷

Similarly, in *Sūrah al-Muddathir*,

﴿مَا سَأَلَكَ فِي سَعْتٍ ۖ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ ۖ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمَسْكِينِ ۖ وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَاطِبِينَ ۖ
وَكُنَّا نَكْتِبُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۖ﴾

“What drove you to the Scorching Fire? And they will answer, ‘We did not pray; we did not feed the poor; we indulged with others [in mocking the believers]; we denied the Day of Judgement.”¹¹⁸

In *Sūrah al-Hāqqah*,

﴿إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ۖ وَلَا يَحِضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ ۖ﴾

“He would not believe in Almighty Allah. He never encouraged feeding the hungry.”¹¹⁹

The origin of this is all the same and that is the hardened heart. Such a heart is dead and will not be softened by anything, not a loved one, the poor or the needy.

Here too, in *Sūrah Yā Sīn*, the same can be said; that hearts void of piety are the hardened hearts. Such hearts do not soften for the truth, clear proofs, nor do they soften towards the needy for whom hearts usually break,

﴿قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اطَّعِمُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ ۖ﴾

117 Al-Mā‘ūn: 1-3

118 Al-Muddathir: 42-46

119 Al-Hāqqah: 33-34

“The disbelievers say to the believers, ‘Why should we feed those that Allah could feed if He wanted?’”¹²⁰

Thus, looking at other verses in the Qur’an can help to make the connection between the verses being studied.

3. *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah* & The Believing Women

The theme of *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah* is to free oneself from the disbelievers and not to take them as allies or love them. Allah mentions therein how Ibrāhīm freed himself from them. He also states how there is no contradiction between freeing oneself from their beliefs whilst also being good and showing kindness to them,

﴿لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ﴾

“And He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes”¹²¹

Allah then says after this,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ۗ﴾

“O you who believe, test the believing women when they come to you as emigrants...”¹²²

Allah then goes onto mention how the believing women should

120 Yā Sīn: 47

121 Al-Mumtaḥinah: 8

122 Al-Mumtaḥinah: 10

not be returned to their disbelieving husbands. What then is the connection?

Allah finally mentions the pledge of allegiance women give to the Prophet (ﷺ),

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ﴾

“O Prophet, when believing women come and pledge to you that they will not ascribe any partner to Allah, nor steal...”¹²³

Again, what is the connection?

In a previous chapter, *Sūrah al-Mujādilah*, Allah mentions the need to absolve oneself from allegiance to the disbelievers,

﴿لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ﴾

“You will not find people who truly believe in Allah and the Last Day giving their loyalty to those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they may be their fathers, sons, brothers, or other relations...”¹²⁴

In *Sūrah al-Tawbah*, Allah says,

﴿لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ﴾

“O believers, do not take your fathers and brothers as allies if they prefer disbelief to faith...”¹²⁵

123 Al-Mumtaḥinah: 12

124 Al-Mujādilah: 22

125 Al-Tawbah: 23

Allah then says further,

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اٰقْرَبْتُمْوهَا وَيَجْرَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا فَاصْلَحُوا وَلَسْتُمْ مِنْ اٰتِيكُمْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَجِهَادِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرْتَصُّوْا حَتّٰى يَأْتِيَ اللّٰهُ بِاَمْرٍ وَّاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾﴾

“Say, ‘If your fathers, sons, brothers, wives, tribes, the wealth you have acquired, the trade which you fear will decline, and the dwellings you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His punishment.’ Allah does not guide those who do evil.”¹²⁶

Thus, there is no allegiance to the disbelievers even if they happen to be spouses.

Here too, in *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah*, Allah clarifies this. There is no loyalty to the disbelievers even if they are children, relatives or parents, and similarly if they are spouses. Fully absolving oneself from those who do not believe in any Divine Scripture means to not support or love them, and likewise, to not marry them. Previous marriage contracts are nullified but without being unfair, so the believing women who are now divorced due to this command, must return to their former husbands their dowries. Likewise, the Muslim men should request for their disbelieving wives their dowries. If they refuse, then take justice at the first available opportunity. Therefore, these verses speak about this type of divorce.

The believing women are in the ranks of great men. They are better than the disbelieving men even if they happen to be their fathers, sons or the noblemen of their tribes. To show loyalty to

the believing women is nobler than showing it to the disbelieving leaders. The believing women are more worthy of your loyalty and more deserving of being sought forgiveness for,

﴿فَبَايَعَهُنَّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ﴾

“...then you should accept their pledge of allegiance and pray to Allah to forgive them...”¹²⁷

Thus, looking at other verses in the Qur'an can help to make the connection between the verses being studied.

127 Al-Mumtahinah: 12

Chapter Five

Knowing the *Ḥadīths* & Narrations of the *Salaf* about the Verse

1. *Sūrah al-Baqarah* & The Verses of Fasting

Allah mentions the verse concerning a person's will,

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةَ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ﴾

*"It is prescribed that he should make a proper bequest to parents and close relatives..."*¹²⁸

Allah then mentions the verse of fasting,

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ﴾

*"...fasting is prescribed for you..."*¹²⁹

Then, at the end of the verses of fasting, Allah says,

128 Al-Baqarah: 180

129 Al-Baqarah: 183

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ يَاسْأَفِرُ وَيُذْئِبُوا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ﴾

“Do not consume your property wrongfully, nor use it to bribe judges, intending sinfully and knowingly to consume parts of other people’s property.”¹³⁰

What then is the relationship between these three verses: the verse of bequest, fasting and devouring the wealth of others unjustly?

Evil speech and actions spoil fasting, and the worst of evil speech and action is false testimony. This is why Allah warns against this before the verses of fasting,

﴿فَمَن بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“If anyone alters the bequest after hearing it, the guilt of the alteration will fall on them: Allah is All Hearing and All Knowing.”¹³¹

This is about someone who entrusts his bequest and final will to a person and then dies, and the one entrusted with charging his bequest alters it. By doing so, he gives rights to those who don’t deserve it or withholds it from those who deserve it, in order to impress some relatives who can then take that wealth unjustly with his testimony. Such a testimony is false. Allah therefore warns against it before mentioning fasting.

False testimony necessitates rulers and judges enforcing false

130 Al-Baqarah: 188

131 Al-Baqarah: 181

testimony and giving wealth away unjustly. Allah says,

﴿فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ﴾

“If anyone alters the bequest after hearing it...”¹³²

Allah then mentions false actions after the verses of fasting. If fasting has no impact on stopping people from false speech and action, then the objectives of fasting from purification and piety are not achieved. This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever doesn’t leave false testimony and acting upon it, Allah has no need from them to leave off food and drink.”¹³³ Therefore, let fasting be pure and free from filth. Thus, the above *ḥadīth* clarifies the connection between the verses.

2. *Sūrah al-A‘rāf* & The Story of Nūḥ

Allah says,

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَتَ سَحَابَاتُهَا قَالُوا لَسْتَ لَهُ لَاسِيًّا
فَنَزَّلْنَا مِنْهُ الْمَغْرِبَ ۖ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ كُلَّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۖ﴾

“It is Allah who sends the winds, bearing good news of His coming grace, and when they have gathered up the heavy clouds, We drive them to a dead land where We cause rain to fall, bringing out all kinds of crops...”¹³⁴

Allah then says,

132 Al-Baqarah: 181

133 Collected by al-Bukhārī

134 Al-A‘rāf: 57

﴿وَالْبَادِئُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبُثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكْدًا﴾

“Vegetation comes out of good land in abundance, by the will of its Lord, but out of bad land only scantily...”¹³⁵

Allah goes onto to say,

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَهُم مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ﴾

“We sent Nūḥ to his people. He said, ‘My people, serve Allah, you have no god other than Him...’¹³⁶

What is the connection between these verses and the story of Nūḥ?

People are like different types of soil. Some people are like good soil. They accept divine revelation just as good land accepts rain water; they are guided, learn, teach others and thus bear fruits. Other people are like bad soil. They don’t accept divine revelation and guidance. Yet others are in between these two groups.

Our Prophet (ﷺ) explained this connection, “The example of the guidance and knowledge Allah sent me with is like that of plentiful rain falling on the earth. Some of that earth is pure, accepts the rain and brings forth vegetation and fodder. Other parts of the earth retain the rain water, and people benefit from Allah’s grace. They drink from it and water other things with it. Another group is like barren land which neither holds water nor brings forth vegetation. That is the example of the one who understands Allah’s religion and benefits from what Allah sent me with, so learns and

135 Al-A‘rāf: 58

136 Al-A‘rāf: 59

teaches. The other is the example of the one who does not accept Allah's guidance with which I was sent."¹³⁷

The earth that doesn't retain water nor bring forth vegetation is bad soil, whereas the first two mentioned are examples of good soil. Thus, the above *ḥadīth* clarifies the connection between the verses.

3. *Sūrah al-Naḥl* & The Sabbath

Allah says,

﴿ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ١٢٣﴾

*"Then We revealed to you, 'Follow the creed of Ibrahim, a man of pure faith who was not an idolater.'"*¹³⁸

Allah then says,

﴿إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ١٢٤﴾

*"The Sabbath was made obligatory only for those who differed about it."*¹³⁹

What is the connection between these two verses?

Allah legislated for every nation a day in the week on which they congregate and manifest the signs of their pure faith. These days

137 Collected by al-Bukhārī & Muslim

138 Al-Naḥl: 123

139 Al-Naḥl: 124

are from the greatest signs of the religion. Allah legislated Friday for this *ummah* as it was the sixth day on which Allah completed His creation, and thus His favour and grace was completed. Allah had also legislated this for the Children of Israel through His Prophet Mūsā, but his people differed over it, changed it and chose Saturday instead. This is why Allah then says,

﴿إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ﴾

*“The Sabbath was made obligatory only for those who differed about it.”*¹⁴⁰

Mujāhid said, “They followed themselves and left Friday.” It has been reported in the two authentic collections of *ḥadīth* that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “We are the last but the first on the Day of Judgement, even though others were given the Scriptures before us. This was the day that Allah had given to them but they differed over it. However, Allah guided us to it, so others will follow us in this. The Jews are a day behind us and the Christians a day behind them.”

Abū Hurayrah and Ḥudhayfah both narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Those before us were led away from Friday. The Jews took Saturday and the Christians Sunday. Allah then brought us and guided us to Friday. Friday comes first, then Saturday and then Sunday. On the Day of Judgement, they will also follow us. We are the last to come in this world but the first on the Day of Judgement. Our judgement will be before all others.”¹⁴¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained that when they differed they

140 Ibid

141 Collected by Muslim. This connection is found in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* with slight amendments

opposed the religion of Ibrāhīm, and thus Allah led them away from the path of divine blessings. From that misguidance is choosing Saturday instead of Friday. Therefore, all those who do not follow the religion of Ibrāhīm, whether it is an individual or a nation, Allah has led them astray and placed disunity and differing amongst them, and prevented them from receiving His divine blessings. This is what happened to the Children of Israel when they opposed the religion of Ibrāhīm. Thus, the above *ḥadīth* clarifies the connection between the verses.

Chapter Six

Knowing the Theme of the *Sūrah*

Knowing the theme of a *sūrah* can help you to make the connection between a verse and the overall theme. Similarly, the verse before and after the one you are reading can be linked together via the theme of the *sūrah*. This is helpful in making the connection between verses.

1. *Sūrah al-Anbiyā'* & The Stories of the Prophets

In this *sūrah*, a number of stories of the Prophets are mentioned in succession. We have the stories of Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ, Nūḥ, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Ayyūb, Ismā'il, Yūnus, Zakariyyā and 'Īsā. What is the connection between these stories? Why wasn't a single story enough to reinforce the theme? Why are they also relayed in this particular order?

The theme of *Sūrah al-Anbiyā'* is to mention the proofs for resurrection, as the disbelieving Arabs used to consider it farfetched. On the Day of Resurrection, the creations that will be held to account are the humans and the *jinn*. The *jinn* were created

from fire. The humans were made from water and soil mixed together to make clay, this was dried with air and then the spirit blown into it. Allah mentions these origins of creation in order and that all of them are subservient to Allah and His command, why then is resurrection farfetched?

Since the *jinn* were created before humans, Allah mentions through the story of Ibrāhīm how fire is obedient to Him,

﴿يَنَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ٦٩﴾

“Fire, be cool and safe for Ibrāhīm.”¹⁴²

In order to move from the two opposites of fire onto water which is mentioned in the story of Nūḥ, Allah interludes with the story of Lūṭ. The people of Lūṭ were destroyed by both fire and water, and thus this acts as an introduction to the story of Nūḥ, and the stones of punishment mentioned in the story of Lūṭ are a prelude to the story of Dāwūd.

In the story of Nūḥ, his nation was destroyed by being drowned in water and the divine floods, showing that water too is obedient to Allah,

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ٧٧﴾

“They were evil people, so We drowned them all.”¹⁴³

We then have the story of Dāwūd and how soil and stones are under Allah’s command,

142 Al-Anbiyā’: 69

143 Al-Anbiyā’: 77

﴿وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ﴾

*“We made the mountains celebrate our praise with Dāwūd...”*¹⁴⁴

In the story of Sulaymān, air in its strongest form of fast wind is mentioned,

﴿وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الَّرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا﴾

*“We harnessed the stormy wind for Sulaymān, so that it sped by his command to the land We had blessed...”*¹⁴⁵

The soul is mentioned in intimate and beautiful detail by Allah and that it too subjects itself to His command. Most people’s souls leave due to a fatal illness which ends with death. However, if Allah does not will this, the soul cannot leave no matter how debilitating the illness, as seen in the story of Ayyūb,

﴿أَنِّي مَسْنِيَ الصُّرُوفَ وَأَنْتَ أَزْهَمُ الرَّحِمِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ، فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ صُرٍّ﴾

*“...Suffering has truly afflicted me, but You are the Most Merciful of the merciful. We answered him, removed his suffering...”*¹⁴⁶

A further stage of impending death is when someone is due to be executed. When the sword is placed on the neck so to speak, there is hardly any chance for reprieve. However, if Allah wills, He can change this. Thus, we are given the example of Ismā’il who had a knife upon his neck, but Allah did not decree death for him

144 Al-Anbiyā’: 79

145 Al-Anbiyā’: 81

146 Al-Anbiyā’: 83-84

or that his soul should depart at that time,

﴿وَاِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾¹⁴⁷

“And remember Ismā‘il, Idrīs and Dhul-Kifl: they were all steadfast.”¹⁴⁷

More extreme than the above, is to be in the proverbial mouth of the lion. Despite this, if Allah does not will for the soul to depart, it cannot. In the story of Yūnus being swallowed by the whale, he entered into the darkness of its stomach, but Allah did not allow his soul to depart there,

﴿فَتَدَا فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَن لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾
﴿فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْعَمَى﴾

“...but then he cried out in the deep darkness, ‘There is none worthy of worship but You, glory be to You, I was wrong. We answered him and saved him from distress.’¹⁴⁸

This is the detailed explanation of the soul, and how unless Allah wills, it cannot depart the body. The soul is subservient to Allah. The opposite is also true. In the example of Zakariyyā, both he and his wife were unable to have children. His wife was infertile when she was young let alone now in old age. However, Allah willed that life would come from them and that the soul should enter into their fluid. Allah brought life through their reproductive fluids so their child was named after life,

﴿فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَى﴾

147 Al-Anbiyā': 85

148 Al-Anbiyā': 87-88

“We answered him – We gave to him Yaḥyā...”¹⁴⁹

The greatness of Allah’s power is further seen in that the female chromosome is ‘X’, how can it then alone produce a male whose chromosome ‘XY’? Where does the ‘Y’ chromosome come from? Yet the spirit was blown into it in a miraculous way,

﴿وَالَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾﴾

“Remember the one who guarded her chastity. We breathed into her from Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign for all people.”¹⁵⁰

Therefore, these six origins of life: fire, water, soil, air, the soul and reproductive fluids are all under Allah’s command. Can He then not recreate again? Hence, by knowing the theme of a *sūrah*, we can determine the connection between verses.

2. The Oaths by the Fig & the Olive

In *Sūrah al-Tīn*, why does Allah take an oath by these four things: the fig, the olive, Mount Sinai and the Secure City? What is the connection?

The theme of *Sūrah al-Tīn* is to show that people’s natures are different. These natures show their true colours at times of calamity, but are fortified through faith and righteous deeds. Some souls are blessed and are as sweet as the sweetness of figs. Others are pure, clean and bright as pure olive oil. Yet others are strong and firm like the strength of Mount Sinai, and others are secure and tranquil like the tranquillity of the Sacred City,

149 Al-Anbiyā’: 90

150 Al-Anbiyā’: 91

﴿وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ ۝ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ ۝ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ۝﴾

“By the fig, by the olive. By Mount Sinai. By this safe town.”¹⁵¹

At times, all of these characteristics can unite in a single individual. Allah’s wisdom dictated that He created man in the best of form and fashion. He gave humans intellect and facilitated for them knowledge, learning, wisdom and speech. Allah gave humans the natural disposition to worship Him alone. He bestowed within us talents, and gave us the abilities and characteristics with which we can become upright and attain the highest of stations,

﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۝﴾

“We create man in the finest state.”¹⁵²

Whoever takes advantage of their skills and abilities and uses them to better themselves through faith and good deeds, Allah will help them to gather the greatest of blessings, and allow them to reach the highest levels. Their reward will be continuous,

﴿فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ۝﴾

“...they will have an unfailing reward.”¹⁵³

Some will receive a greater reward and others less. However, those who do evil will lose these special abilities and will fall,

151 Al-Tīn: 1-3

152 Al-Tīn: 4

153 Al-Tīn: 6

﴿أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ﴾

“...to the lowest of the low.”¹⁵⁴

Is there then a judge more just than Allah?

﴿أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ﴾

“Is Allah not the most decisive of judges?”¹⁵⁵

Hence, by knowing the theme of the *sūrah* we can determine the significance of these four matters by which Allah takes an oath.

3. *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* & The Verses of Bequeathing

What is the link between the following two verses? The first verse is regarding the final bequest,

﴿شَهِدَ بَيْنَكُمُ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ﴾

“...when death approaches any of you, let two just men from among you act as witnesses to the making of a bequest, or two men from another people...”¹⁵⁶

The other verse is,

154 Al-Tīn: 5

155 Al-Tīn: 8

156 Al-Mā'idah: 106

﴿يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ﴾¹⁵⁷

“On the Day when Allah assembles all the messengers and asks, ‘What response did you receive?’”¹⁵⁷

The theme of *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* is the covenant Allah took from people that they would worship Him alone and call to His way. Allah therefore mentions the first verse, commanding His servants to preserve Allah's covenant, hold onto it and call others to it. This covenant should be passed onto children and relatives and reaffirmed by having witnesses attest to it. If a person at the time of death is eager to preserve their wealth, they should be more eager to preserve the covenant of their religion and the pact that they have with Allah,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهِدُوا بَيْنَكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ﴾

“O you who believe, when death approaches any of you, let two just men from among you act as witnesses to the making of a bequest...”¹⁵⁸

Remember that Allah will question you about this covenant. Furthermore, He will ask the Messengers and callers who were sent to you as to how they conveyed this covenant to their nations and the responses they received from them,

﴿يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ﴾

157 Al-Mā'idah: 109

158 Al-Mā'idah: 106

*“On the Day when Allah assembles all the messengers and asks, ‘What response did you receive?’”*¹⁵⁹

Hence, by knowing the theme of the *sūrah* we can determine the connection between verses.

159 Al-Mā'idah: 109

Chapter Seven

Knowing the Context of the Verses

At times, you can read a single verse or a number of verses that seem to be completely disconnected to the previous topic. However, you ascertain the connection by understanding the context of the verses.

1. *Sūrah al-Shūrā* & Being Blessed with Children

Allah says towards the end of *Sūrah al-Shūrā*,

﴿اسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ، مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ مُّخْرَجٍ تَوَمَّنْ أَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّكُم مِّنْ فَكٍّ مُّبِينٍ﴾
تَكْبِيرُ ﴿فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنَسَلْتُكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ حَافِظًا ۖ﴾

“So respond to your Lord before there comes a Day that cannot, against Allah’s will, be averted – you will have no refuge on that Day, and no possibility of denying [your sins]. If they still turn away. We have not sent you to be their guardian...”¹⁶⁰

160 Al-Shūrā: 47-48

Allah then says,

﴿لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِلَآثًا وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ الذِّكْرُ لِلّٰهِ
يُرْوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرًا وَاُنْثٰى وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ عَقِيْرًا ۗ﴾

“Allah has control of the heavens and the earth; He creates whatever He will – He grants female offspring to whoever He will, male to whoever He will, or both male and female, and He makes whoever He will barren”¹⁶¹

What is the connection?

The context of these verses is the obligation of complying with the divine *sharīʿah* as Allah commanded, and how people differ in their responses to this. The first category of people are those who comply,

﴿وَيَسْتَجِیْبُ الَّذِیْنَ ءَامَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَيَزِدُّهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۗ﴾

“He responds to those who believe and do good deeds, and gives them more of His bounty...”¹⁶²

These people are leaders and Allah details their compliance,

﴿وَالَّذِیْنَ اَسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُورٰی بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ﴾

“Those who respond to their Lord, keep up the prayer, conduct their affairs by mutual consultation...”¹⁶³

161 Al-Shūrā: 49-50

162 Al-Shūrā: 26

163 Al-Shūrā: 38

Within this group there are levels; some repay bad with the same, others forgive and have mercy, others do further good and yet some may oppress at times,

﴿وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾﴾

“Let harm be requited by an equal harm, though anyone who forgives and puts things right will have his reward from Allah Himself – He does not like those who do wrong.”¹⁶⁴

Yet others amongst them are firm and strong, merciful and patient, and they have the highest levels of reward,

﴿وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾

“Though if a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things.”¹⁶⁵

A second category of people do not comply with the *shari’ah*,

﴿وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ ۖ مَنْ يَبْعِدِهِ ۚ﴾

“Anyone Allah allows to stray will have no one else to protect him”¹⁶⁶

Allah then concludes this passage with a strong call to comply with the divine *shari’ah*,

164 Al-Shūrā: 40

165 Al-Shūrā: 43

166 Al-Shūrā: 44

﴿اسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ﴾

“So respond to your Lord before there comes a Day that cannot, against Allah’s will, be averted...”¹⁶⁷

If these people turn away and refuse to comply, then know that the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers are not responsible for them,

﴿فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَأَنْزِلْنَا عَنْكَ غَفِيظًا إِنَّ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغَ﴾

“We have not sent you to be their guardian: your only duty is to deliver the message.”¹⁶⁸

You, O Messenger of Allah, are not responsible for their disbelief. Your duty is only to convey and explain. Do not feel responsible for their refusal and disbelief, for We know that the nature of man is to deny and show ingratitude except for those that Allah has favoured to be grateful,

﴿وَلَوْ أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَجَرَحَ بِهَا وَرَانَ نُصِيبُهُمْ سَيْئَةً يَمُوتُ أَتَيْدِيهِمْ قِيَاتٌ
الْإِنْسَانَ كَقُورٍ﴾

“When We give man a taste of Our mercy, he rejoices in it, but if some harm befalls him on account of what he has done with his own hands, then he is ungrateful.”¹⁶⁹

Know that Allah is able to guide them as He controls everything. As Allah controls the universe, so He has the ability to guide them. However, Allah deals with them according to His knowledge. He

167 Al-Shūrā: 47

168 Al-Shūrā: 48

169 Ibid

honours those who open their hearts to the truth with guidance and compliance, making them of varying levels, and humiliates by His justice those who close their hearts to the truth.

As He divides His guidance, so too does He decree with His complete ability who will have male or female children. To some, He gives sons known for strength, to others daughters known for gentleness and mercy, and yet to others both sons and daughters. Some others are given no children as He through His infinite knowledge knows that this is best for them,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَالِمُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذَّكَرَ أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنثًا وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا﴾

*“Allah has control of the heavens and the earth; He creates whatever He will – He grants female offspring to whoever He will, male to whoever He will, or both male and female, and He makes whoever He will barren: He is All-Knowing and All-Powerful.”*¹⁷⁰

Allah, by His infinite knowledge and power honours whomsoever He wills with guidance and compliance with the *sharīʿah*. Some accept this with strength and conviction, others with mercy and kindness, and others combine all of this when following the *sharīʿah*; these are the ones who open their hearts to the truth. On the other hand, some are denied these honours due to Allah’s complete knowledge and perfect wisdom of their unworthiness. They turn away from Him,

﴿إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ﴾

*“He is All-Knowing and All-Powerful.”*¹⁷¹

170 Al-Shūrā: 49-50

171 Al-Shūrā: 50

Allah, by His knowledge and wisdom chooses amongst the honoured those fit for prophethood. He further honours them and raises their ranks to the highest of levels. He makes them leaders so that they can convey the divine *sharī'ah*. The prophets are the leaders of mankind. Even amongst them there are levels,

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ﴾

إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ

“It is not granted to any mortal that Allah should speak to him except through revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal by His command what He will: He is exalted and wise.”¹⁷²

All of this is from Allah’s perfect wisdom. Allah bestows His blessings upon some by His perfect wisdom, and prevents others by His perfect wisdom. Two opposites do not meet and two of the same do not depart. You, O Messenger of Allah, have been chosen by Allah to be the leader of all leaders, prophets and messengers. You will be the flag bearer. To you, We have given the best and most noble *sharī'ah*,

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَنُ وَلَٰكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا ۚ﴾

“So We have revealed a Spirit to you by Our command: you knew neither the Scripture not the faith, but We made it a light...”¹⁷³

Thus, the verses of having children are mentioned in the greater context of how people respond to the divine *sharī'ah*. Therefore, you can ascertain the connection between verses by linking them to the overall context of the verses.

172 Al-Shūrā: 51

173 Al-Shūrā: 52

2. The End of *Sūrah al-Nisā'* & The Verse of Inheritance

The end of *Sūrah al-Nisā'* mentions Allah's oneness in worship and absolves Him of any partner in worship. Allah mentions that the best of creation are those who are most subservient to Him, such as the messengers and angels,

﴿لَنْ يَسْتَكْفِرَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ﴾

*“The Messiah would never disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the angels who are close to Him.”*¹⁷⁴

Allah then mentions the rewards of those who worship Him alone,

﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي دَحْمَةِ رَحْمَتِهِ وَقَبْلُ وَبِهِدِهِمْ إِلَيْهِ
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا﴾

*“Allah will admit those who believe in Him and hold fast to Him into His mercy and favour; He will guide them towards Him on a straight path.”*¹⁷⁵

There is then a sudden change to the topic of inheritance of brothers,

﴿يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ إِنِ امْرُؤٌ هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ أُخْتُ﴾

*“They ask you for a ruling. Say, ‘Allah gives you are ruling about inheritance from someone who dies childless with no surviving parents. If a childless man leaves a sister...’*¹⁷⁶

174 Al-Nisā': 172

175 Al-Nisā': 175

176 Al-Nisā': 176

What is the connection?

The greater context in which this verse is mentioned is to show how all the prophets and messengers worshipped Allah alone,

﴿إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا﴾

“We have sent revelation to you as We did to Nūḥ and the prophets after him, to Ibrāhīm, Ismā’īl, Ishāq, Ya‘qūb, and the Tribes, to ‘Isā, Ayyūb, Yūnus, Hārūn and Sulaymān – to Dāwūd We gave the Psalms.”¹⁷⁷

All of the prophets from Adam are a single nation and group. They are like a single loving family beneath a single flag; the flag of *tawḥīd*. Furthermore, all the prophets are like paternal brothers, and the Prophet (ﷺ) is their leader and the last of them. This is why he is mentioned first by the testimony of Allah and the angels,

﴿إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ﴾

“We have sent revelation to you as We did to Nūḥ and the prophets after him...”¹⁷⁸

They are a single family due to their complete submission to Allah. They are not related to Allah as the Christians claimed about Jesus, he too is Allah’s servant. Likewise, the angels are Allah’s servants. They too are not related to Allah as the polytheist Arabs claimed; that they are the offspring of Allah. Far removed is Allah from their assertions,

177 Al-Nisā’: 163

178 Ibid

﴿لَنْ يَسْتَكْبِرَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ﴾

“The Messiah would never disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the angels who are close to Him.”¹⁷⁹

Just as what makes the Prophets brothers is their worship of Allah alone, then all of you should be brothers to one another, your bond of brotherhood coming from your submission to Allah. Therefore, be a single nation, united and holding onto Allah’s path,

﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى

صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

“Allah will admit those who believe in Him and hold fast to Him into His mercy and favour; He will guide them towards Him on a straight path.”¹⁸⁰

All of you and all of the prophets are a single nation and one family. You all have the same foundation and belief. Paternal brothers are those who have the same father but different mothers, yet they still inherit from one another. The prophets are paternal brothers as mentioned by the Prophet (ﷺ), their creed is one but they were sent with differing laws. Thus, each prophet inherited from his brother prophet just as someone inherits from their blood brother.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was a brother to all the previous prophets and was the last of them, so he alone inherits the prophethood of all those who came before him and his *sharī‘ah* abrogates all those previous to it. This is why Allah mentions this verse of inheritance of brothers after the previous verses,

179 Al-Nisā’: 172

180 Al-Nisā’: 175

﴿يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ أَلَيْسَ لِمَنْ دُونَهُ خِصَّةٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ لَا وَلَدَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُرِثُهُمْ إِنْ كُنُوا عَلِمَاءً﴾

“They ask you for a ruling. Say, ‘Allah gives you are ruling about inheritance from someone who dies childless with no surviving parents. If a childless man leaves a sister, she is entitled to half of the inheritance; if she has no child her brother is her sole heir...’”¹⁸¹

Therefore, be brothers upon faith and *tawhīd* as brought by the Prophet (ﷺ). This was the belief of the prophets. Hold onto the three principles and the *sharī'ah*. Treat one another kindly so that you remain a united nation and as one close family, possessing noble character as brothers one to another,

﴿يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“...Allah makes this clear to you so that you do not make mistakes: He has full knowledge of everything.”¹⁸²

Thus, this verse of inheritance is in the greater context of the inheritance of *tawhīd* the Prophet (ﷺ) received from his brother prophets. Therefore, you can ascertain the connection between verses by linking them to the overall context of the verses.

3. *Āyat al-Kursī* & The Two Stories of Ibrāhīm

There is a verse that enjoins charity,

181 Al-Nisā': 176

182 Ibid

﴿أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفِيعَةٌ﴾^ط

“...give from what We have provided for you, before the Day comes when there is no bargaining, no friendship, and no intercession.”¹⁸³

Allah then mentions *Āyat al-Kursī* and then the verse,

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ﴾^ط

“There is no compulsion in religion...”¹⁸⁴

Next, the story of Ibrāhīm and Nimrūd is relayed and then the story of ‘Uzayr,

﴿أَوَكَلِّدِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا﴾^ط

“Or the one who passed by a ruined town. He said, ‘How will Allah give this life when it has died?’”¹⁸⁵

Then, there is the story of Ibrāhīm and the bird, after which we return back to the topic of charity,

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ﴾

“Those who spend their wealth in Allah’s cause are like grains of corn...”¹⁸⁶

What is the connection?

183 Al-Baqarah: 254

184 Al-Baqarah: 256

185 Al-Baqarah: 259

186 Al-Baqarah: 261

The greater context here is to strive in giving charity in order to realise the greatest objective for which mankind was created; the spread of *tawhīd* across the world,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ﴾

*“O you who believe, give from what We have provided for you...”*¹⁸⁷

At the same time, it is clearly mentioned that Allah’s greatness is such that He has no need of His creation, their wealth or their charity. He is,

﴿الْحَىُّ الْقَيُّومُ﴾

*“...the Ever Living, the Self Sufficient Sustainer.”*¹⁸⁸

The greatest verse of the Qur’an - *Āyat al-Kursī* - is mentioned in the context of spending in the way of Allah to show that Allah’s greatness means that He is free of needing anything from His creation. When this objective of charity is met, and those false gods who prevent the spreading of the message of *tawhīd* are removed, then there is no compulsion in religion,

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ﴾

*“There is no compulsion in religion...”*¹⁸⁹

Instead, call them using clear intellectual and rational proofs with noble character free from cursing and swearing, as found in the story of Ibrāhīm with Nimrūd. Do not think it impossible for a disbeliever’s heart to receive faith, no matter how far gone in disbelief he is. Allah is able to bring life to the dead in this world - although it is a rare occurrence, as we find in the story of ‘Uzayr,

187 Al-Baqarah: 254

188 Al-Baqarah: 255

189 Al-Baqarah: 256

﴿فَأَمَاتُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ﴾

“...So Allah made him die for a hundred years, and then raised him up...”¹⁹⁰

Similarly, Allah can bring dead hearts to life with faith, and this is more common. But what is the attribute of the one whose heart is brought to life by faith and attains the highest ranks, whether a believer or disbeliever? It is the one who seeks the truth. This is found in the story of Ibrāhīm when he sought to increase in faith and certainty by learning about Allah’s complete power over bringing the dead to life. Allah increased him in faith and inner peace,

﴿قَالَ أَوْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَظْمِنَ قَلْبِي﴾

“...He said, ‘Do you not believe then?’ ‘Yes’, said Ibrāhīm, ‘but just to put my heart at rest...”¹⁹¹

As for the one who closes this door upon themselves and their hearts and turn away from seeking the truth, then they will not be guided by Allah. If you then wonder as to how you can call a disbeliever to search for the truth, you do this by spending money on buying them gifts, inviting them for food and so on. Through your generosity, Allah will place in their hearts seven pods, from which seven hundred grains emerge. At the same time, Allah will increase your good deeds by seven hundred and more when you give charity,

190 Al-Baqarah: 259

191 Al-Baqarah: 260

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَائِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سَائِلٍ مِائَةٌ
حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ ضَعِيفٌ لِمَن يَشَاءُ﴾

*“Those who spend their wealth in Allah’s cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. Allah gives multiple increase to whoever He wishes...”*¹⁹²

Thus, *Āyat al-Kursī*, no compulsion in religion, the story of Ibrāhīm with Nimrūd, the story of ‘Uzayr and the story of Ibrāhīm and the bird are all mentioned in the context of giving charity in Allah’s cause to spread the message of *tawḥīd*.

Therefore, you can ascertain the connection between verses by linking them to the overall context of the verses.

192 Al-Baqarah: 261

Chapter Eight

The Comment After the Topic

At times, the same topic or something similar is repeated a number of times in the same *sūrah*. This may astonish a person attempting to contemplate the Book of Allah as they try to ascertain the reason behind this. Surely, mentioning the topic once was sufficient? However, we fail to realise that Allah has commented on the topic at its conclusion. For example, Allah may repeat the topic of divine punishments in a single *sūrah*. Upon reflection, we notice that Allah mentions at the end of each topic the punishment of that particular sin, hence the repetition. In another example, Allah may mention His *tawhīd* multiple times. Yet on reflection, each repetition is mentioning a different proof justifying Allah's right to be worshipped alone. Or at times, each topic is mentioning a different blessing, for which the One who bestowed it is deserving of being thanked and worshipped alone. Thus, each repetition is to further clarify and elucidate the point.

1. *Sūrah al-Naḥl* & Many Blessings

In this *sūrah*, Allah mentions nine types of blessings with which He has blessed mankind. These blessings necessitate gratitude to Allah and worship of Him alone, but many people respond with rejection and ingratitude.

a. The first blessing

It is the basis of all blessings. The greatest of all blessings that deserves thanks is the sending of the messengers and the revelation of the divine scriptures for mankind's guidance,

﴿يُنْزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ﴾

*“He sends down the angels, with the inspiration of His command, upon whom He wills of His servants...”*¹⁹³

Allah then created the heavens and earth, mankind, animals and livestock. He caused the rain to fall, set the day and night in motion with the stars. He created the seas, mountains, rivers and paths and all the benefits created therein,

﴿وَالْقَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾¹⁹⁴

*“And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you, and rivers and roads, that you may be guided.”*¹⁹⁴

Included in this greatest of blessings is the universal laws that dictate what takes place in the heavens, earth and in the universe,

193 Al-Naḥl: 2

194 Al-Naḥl: 15

﴿وَعَلَّمَتِ بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ﴾

*“And landmarks. And by the stars they are guided.”*¹⁹⁵

However, people responded by associating partners with Allah,

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ﴾

*“And those they invoke other than Allah create nothing, and they are created.”*¹⁹⁶

They also responded with arrogance, plotting and using divine decree as a justification for their disbelief,

﴿وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَمُوتُ﴾

*“They have sworn by Allah with their strongest oaths that He will not raise the dead to life...”*¹⁹⁷

Another response of theirs was to belittle the messengers and their followers; harming them. They then claimed Allah had daughters,

﴿وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَهُ﴾

*“They assign daughters to Allah – may He be exalted!”*¹⁹⁸

195 Al-Nahl: 16

196 Al-Nahl: 20

197 Al-Nahl: 38

198 Al-Nahl: 58

Their justification for each of these crimes is weak and rejected. They will be punished painfully for each one of them,

﴿لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُونَ﴾¹⁹⁹

“Without doubt it is the Fire that belongs to them: they will be given priority there!”¹⁹⁹

b. The second blessing

To Enjoy the blessings and goodness they received in the form of what Allah bestowed upon them of water and milk,

﴿وَإِنْ لَّكَ فِي الْإِنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةٌ لِّتُزَكَّرَ بِمَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لِّبَاطِنٍ أَلَسَا بِغَالِشِينَ﴾²⁰⁰

“In livestock, too, you have a lesson – We give you a drink from the contents of their bellies, between waster matter and blood, pure milk, sweet to the drinker.”²⁰⁰

They also enjoy wine, juices and honey. Allah further blessed them with longevity that they may continue to enjoy their wealth, spouses, children, grandchildren and other bounties. However, they repaid this with disbelief, rejection and worshipping those that own nothing and have no divine ability,

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا مِنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ﴾

“Those they worship beside Allah have no power to provide anything

199 Al-Nahl: 62

200 Al-Nahl: 66

*for them from the heavens or the earth: they can do nothing.”*²⁰¹

c. The third blessing

This blessing is that of strength that allows a person to live and go about their lives. It is the ability to make decisions, speak, understand, rationalise, weigh things up and have integrity. It is the power to hear, see and experience,

﴿وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ﴾

*“...and gave you hearing and sight and minds...”*²⁰²

It is the further ability to notice, think, deduce and learn the laws that govern the universe,

﴿الْمُرُورَ إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي جَوِّ السَّمَاءِ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ﴾

*“Do they not see the birds made to fly through the air in the sky?
Nothing holds them up except Allah.”*²⁰³

They responded to this blessing by thanking their false gods who are deaf and dumb, own nothing and can only harm them,

﴿وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكُرُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَى مَوْلَاهُ أَيْنَمَا

يُوجَّهُهُ لَا يَأْتِ خَيْرٌ﴾

*“Allah presents another illustration: two men, one of them dumb,
unable to do anything, a burden to his carer – whatever task he directs*

201 Al-Nahl: 73

202 Al-Nahl: 78

203 Al-Nahl: 79

him to, he achieves nothing good...”²⁰⁴

d. The fourth blessing

This is the blessing of pleasure, rest and enjoying comforts and delights,

﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا﴾

“It is Allah who has given you a place of rest in your homes...”²⁰⁵

He further gave them the blessings of furnishings, shade and clothing. Yet again they responded with rejection, disbelief, oppression and blocking others from Allah’s path,

﴿الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ﴾

“For those who disbelieved and barred others from Allah’s path, We shall add torment upon torment...”²⁰⁶

Thus, the disbelief and rejection of the disbelievers is repeated after each type of blessing, as each one necessitates that they should thank Allah and worship Him alone.

2. *Sūrah Muḥammad*

In *Sūrah Muḥammad*, deeds going to waste and amounting to nothing is repeated,

204 Al-Naḥl: 76

205 Al-Naḥl: 80

206 Al-Naḥl: 88

﴿فَأَحْطَ أَعْمَالُهُمْ ۝٩﴾

“He has caused their deeds to go to waste.”²⁰⁷

﴿وَأَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝٨﴾

“Allah has brought their deeds to nothing.”²⁰⁸

What is the connection?

In this *sūrah*, Allah mentions the causes of humiliation that at times can be accompanied by deeds being nullified and wasted. Allah first mentions the foundation of all humiliation and nullification of deeds, that being disbelief, barring others from Allah’s path and following falsehood,

﴿الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝١﴾

“Allah will bring to nothing the deeds of those who disbelieve and bar others from the way of Allah.”²⁰⁹

Another cause of humiliation that also nullifies deeds is to dislike what Allah revealed,

﴿ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ فَاحْطَبُوا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝٩﴾

“It is because they hate what Allah has sent down that He has caused

207 Muḥammad: 9

208 Muḥammad: 8

209 Muḥammad: 1

their deeds to go to waste.”²¹⁰

A third cause of humiliation that nullifies deeds is to spread evil upon the earth and break the ties of kinship,

﴿فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَن تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ ۚ﴾^(٢٢)

“If you turn away now, could it be that you will go on to spread corruption all over the land and break your ties of kinship?”²¹¹

Alongside this they apostate,

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ﴾

“Those who turn on their heels...”²¹²

They further have hypocrisy and help the disbelieves against Islam,

﴿ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ سُبُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأُمْرِ﴾^(٢٣)

“They said to those who hate what Allah has sent down, ‘We will obey you in some matters’ ...”²¹³

They also dislike pleasing Allah,

﴿ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا أَشْخَطَ اللَّهَ وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ ۖ فَأَخْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۚ﴾^(٢٤)

210 Muḥammad: 9

211 Muḥammad: 22

212 Muḥammad: 25

213 Muḥammad: 26

“Because they practised things that incurred Allah’s wrath, and disdained to please Him? He makes their deeds go to waste.”²¹⁴

Yet another cause of humiliation and nullification of deeds is to oppose the Messenger (ﷺ),

﴿وَشَاقُوا الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۖ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيُحِطُّ أَعْمَالُهُمْ﴾

“...and oppose the Messenger when they have been shown guidance, do not harm Allah in any way. He will make their deeds go to waste.”²¹⁵

A further cause of humiliation that nullifies deeds is innovation in the religion and not following prophetic guidance in worship. How can an act of worship not mentioned by the Prophet (ﷺ) be accepted?

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ﴾

“O believers, obey Allah and the Messenger: do not let your deeds go to waste.”²¹⁶

Thus, the repetition of nullified actions is that each issue mentioned is a cause of nullification. Therefore, each time nullified deeds are mentioned it is due to it being another reason for humiliation.

214 Muḥammad: 28

215 Muḥammad: 32

216 Muḥammad: 33

3. *Sūrah al-Faṭḥ*

In *Sūrah al-Faṭḥ*, Allah repeats the reward of those who obey Allah and the Messenger (ﷺ) as well as the punishment of those who oppose Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). What is the connection and wisdom behind this?

Each time Allah mentions an example of the Prophet's (ﷺ) victory, He mentions the reward of those who supported him and the punishment of those who opposed him in each case. Allah mentions the stance of the Companions at the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, in which the treaty contained clauses that upset the Companions. Yet they followed the Prophet (ﷺ) so Allah mentioned their reward,

﴿لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا﴾

*“So as to admit believing men and women into Gardens graced with flowing streams, there to remain...”*²¹⁷

In the same instance, Allah mentions the punishment of the hypocrites who refused to support him,

﴿وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ﴾

*“And to torment the hypocritical men and women...”*²¹⁸

Before the Treaty, Allah mentioned the response of the two groups at the Pledge of Ridwān,

217 Al-Faṭḥ: 5

218 Al-Faṭḥ: 6

﴿فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمِىْزَتِهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝١٩﴾

“...and anyone who breaks his pledge does so to his own detriment: Allah will give a great reward to the one who fulfils his pledge to Him.”²¹⁹

Allah also mentions the ‘Umrah of Ḥudaybiyyah when the Prophet (ﷺ) set out but the hypocrites refused to accompany him for fear of fighting. They preferred not to support him and instead used the excuses of wealth and family to remain behind,

﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا ۝٢٠﴾

“We have prepared a blazing Fire for those who do not believe in Allah and His Messenger.”²²⁰

Further on, Allah mentions the Prophet’s (ﷺ) journey to Khaybar and the reaction of the Companions and hypocrites in this regard,

﴿فَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَمْرًا مِّنْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهُ حَسَنًا ۚ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۝٢١﴾

“...if you obey, Allah will reward you well, but if you turn away, as you have done before, He will punish you heavily.”²²¹

Allah then includes in the above all those who had legitimate excuses to remain behind. He mentions the reward of those who obey the Messenger (ﷺ) and the punishment of those who turn away from following the Prophet (ﷺ),

219 Al-Fath: 10

220 Al-Fath: 13

221 Al-Fath: 16

﴿لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَنفُسِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَمَن يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يَدْخُلْهُ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ يَْعَذَّبْهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

“The blind, the lame, and the sick will not be blamed. Allah will admit anyone who obeys Him and His Messenger to Gardens graced with flowing streams; He will painfully punish anyone who turns away.”²²²

Thus, after each example, Allah mentions the reward of those who supported the Prophet (ﷺ) and the punishment of those who opposed him.

²²² Al-Fath: 17

Chapter Nine

Knowing the Topics of a *Sūrah*

There is sometimes no apparent connection between two passages, yet by knowing the topics discussed in the *sūrah*, you realise that each passage is speaking about a topic. Thus, by deducing the topics mentioned, you can connect each passage with the ones before and after.

1. *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf* & Respecting Parents

In *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf*, Allah describes the Qur'an,

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كُتِبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً ۚ وَهَٰذَا كِتَابٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا نَزَّلْنَا بِالْهُدَىٰ وَالْبَيِّنَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ ظَاهِمُونَ
وَنَشَرِّقُ بِالْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

*“Yet the Scripture of Mūsā was revealed before it as a guide and a mercy, and this is a scripture confirming it in the Arabic language to warn those who do evil and bring good news for those who do good.”*²²³

223 Al-Aḥqāf: 12

Allah then mentions the reward of those who do good. He then says,

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ۚ

*“We have commanded man to be good to his parents: his mother struggled to carry him and struggled to give birth to him...”*²²⁴

What is the connection?

The theme of this *sūrah* is to exemplify the numerous ways in which the disbelievers opposed the divine message. The topics of the *sūrah* therefore speak to this theme. One example of their opposition was their refusal to accept the testimony of the greatest of all those who testify: Allah who testifies to His own Oneness,

﴿كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۚ

*“He is sufficient as a witness between me and you...”*²²⁵

The testimony of the messengers, the faithful scholars of the Children of Israel, the previous Divine Scriptures and the Qur’an are also mentioned,

﴿وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانِ عَرَبِيَّاتٍ﴾

*“...and this is a scripture confirming it in the Arabic language...”*²²⁶

This is then an example of their opposition. Another example of their opposition is their refusal to adopt the high standards that

224 Al-Aḥqāf: 15

225 Al-Aḥqāf: 8

226 Al-Aḥqāf: 12

pure hearts and minds should have, such as showing gratitude to those who show kindness to you,

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا﴾

“We have commanded man to be good to his parents...”²²⁷

Is it not horrid to deny their kindness, their efforts and to turn away from them in disgust as one does from a foul odour? Then how about the one who shows this type of aversion to Allah’s blessings and favours? They repay kindness with rejection, and with disbelief and arrogance from worshipping Allah alone,

﴿يَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَلَذَّتْ بِطَبْعِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا فَلْيَئِسُوا بِالْآخِرَةِ إِنَّ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَعَذِّبُ الْحَقُّ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَقْسِفُونَ﴾

“On the Day when those who deny the truth are brought before the Fire, it will be said to them, ‘You squandered the good things you were given in your earthly life, you took your fill of pleasure there, so on this Day a punishment of shame is yours: you were arrogant on earth without any right, and exceeded all limits.’”²²⁸

This then is another example of their opposition. Thus, by knowing the theme of the *sūrah* – in this case the opposition of the disbelievers to the divine message – and then the topics, you can easily make the connection between the passages. Each passage discusses a topic, and the connection between topics is apparent in supporting the overall theme.

227 Al-Aḥqāf: 15

228 Al-Aḥqāf: 20

2. *Sūrah al-Hujūrāt* & False News

Allah says,

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ۝٤﴾

“But most of those who shout to you from outside your private rooms lack understanding.”²²⁹

He then says,

﴿إِنْ جَاءَكَ فَاسِقٌ مِّنْ بَنِي فَتْيَةٍ يُبَشِّرُكَ أَن يُصِيبُ أَقْرَبًا بِجَاهِلَةٍ ۝٢٣٠﴾

“...if a troublemaker brings you news, check it first, in case you wrong others unwittingly...”²³⁰

What is the connection?

The theme of *Sūrah al-Hujūrāt* is to warn against the dangers of the tongue when speaking to elders, specific people or in general. The *sūrah* calls for good verbal conduct. In this regard, it is poor etiquette to shout out and call to someone who is in a leadership position when they are busy with their family and in their homes. Rather, it is unbecoming to raise your voice in their presence or their absence, let alone to call out to them when they are busy with their families,

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ۝٤﴾

229 Al-Hujūrāt: 4

230 Al-Hujūrāt: 6

“But most of those who shout to you from outside your private rooms lack understanding.”²³¹

This is one topic. Another form of bad verbal conduct is to spread false news amongst others before verifying its authenticity, especially if the news is of a bad nature,

﴿إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا﴾

“...if a troublemaker brings you news, check it first...”²³²

Sometimes the spreading of false news can lead to bloodshed amongst Muslims, transgression between them and the breaking of the bonds of brotherhood,

﴿وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا﴾

“If two groups of the believers fight, you should try to reconcile them...”²³³

Thus, when you learn that the theme of the *sūrah* is to warn against bad verbal conduct and the topics within it, you can make the connection between its verses. Each group of verses refers to a single topic.

231 Al-Hujurāt: 4

232 Al-Hujurāt: 6

233 Al-Hujurāt: 9

3. Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt & Migration

Allah says,

﴿يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ﴾

“They challenge you to hasten the punishment: Hell will encompass all those who deny the truth.”²³⁴

Allah then says,

﴿يَعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِنِّي فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

“My believing servants! My earth is vast, so worship Me and Me alone. Every soul will taste death...”²³⁵

Then comes the verse,

﴿وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ دَابَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رَقْعًا اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ﴾

“How many are the creatures who do not store their sustenance! Allah sustains them and you...”²³⁶

What is the connection?

The theme of Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt is the trials the believers face from their enemies in order for them to forsake *tawhīd* and commit *shirk*. On further reflection, the topics of this sūrah speak to the trials the believers face that make them uncomfortable. An

234 Al-‘Ankabūt: 54

235 Al-‘Ankabūt: 56-57

236 Al-‘Ankabūt: 60

example of this is the demand of the disbelievers that they would only believe if certain conditions of theirs were met, such as the demand for more signs,

﴿وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۖ﴾²³⁷

*“They say, ‘Why have no miracles been sent to him by his Lord?’”*²³⁷

Likewise, the delay of divine punishment may be a trial for the believers,

﴿يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنْ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ﴾²³⁸

*“They challenge you to hasten the punishment...”*²³⁸

This is one topic. Another trial faced by the believers is the threat of exile and forced migration. Yet why do you fear migration? Do you fear death? Do you fear a lack of provision in your new land? As for death, then,

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ﴾²³⁹

*“Every soul will taste death...”*²³⁹

Therefore, you will not die before your appointed time. When death does finally come, we will welcome you and take you to a better life,

237 Al-‘Ankabūt: 50

238 Al-‘Ankabūt: 54

239 Al-‘Ankabūt: 57

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾﴾

“Every soul will taste death, then it is to Us that you will be returned.”²⁴⁰

We have prepared for your arrival in the hereafter,

﴿لَنُبَوِّتَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ﴿٢٤١﴾﴾

“...shall lodge in lofty dwellings, in the Garden graced with flowing streams, there to remain.”²⁴¹

As for provision, then be certain that Allah will provide for you in your new land, for He sustains all of His creation,

﴿وَكَيْفَ أَتَىٰ مِنَ دَابَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رَقْعًا اللَّهُ يُرْزِقُهَا وَيَأْتِيهَا ﴿٢٤٢﴾﴾

“How many are the creatures who do not store their sustenance! Allah sustains them and you...”²⁴²

He controls the treasures of the universe,

﴿اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ ﴿٢٤٣﴾﴾

“It is Allah who gives abundantly to whichever of His servants He will, and sparingly to whichever He will...”²⁴³

240 Ibid

241 Al-‘Ankabūt: 58

242 Al-‘Ankabūt: 60

243 Al-‘Ankabūt: 62

Therefore, be patient. This is another topic.

Thus, the connection between the verse of hastening punishment, migration and provision is seen. These are two topics that affirm the theme of the *sūrah*; the trials the believers face from the disbelievers so that they stop calling to their religion. As such, knowing the topics of a *sūrah* can help to make the connection between verses.

Chapter Ten

Similar Subject Matters

At times, you don't find a clear link between verses. However, if you were to take a general look at the verses, you would see each group of verses speaks about a topic, and these topics are connected with one another.

1. The Verse of Debt & The Three Loans

Towards the end of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, the command to strive with wealth is given by way of encouraging charity,

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ﴾

“Those who spend their wealth in Allah’s cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears...”²⁴⁴

After this, we have the verse prohibiting usury, followed by the verses of debt and advanced payment purchases. What is the

244 Al-Baqarah: 261

connection?

The verses that encourage spending and charity are examples of good loans to Allah if they meet the conditions and requirements. This is the best type of loan. For this reason, Allah mentions the multiplication of reward for it,

﴿قُلِ الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَتَتْ سَمْعَ سَائِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سَائِلَةٍ
فَاتَتْ حَبَّهُ وَأَلْفٌ مِثْقَالُهَا يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“Those who spend their wealth in Allah’s cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. Allah gives multiple increase to whoever He wishes: He is limitless and all knowing.”²⁴⁵

Before this, Allah has also mentioned when speaking about charity and striving with wealth,

﴿مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقرضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَكَ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ
وَالِيهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

“Who will give Allah a good loan, which He will increase for him many times over? It is Allah who withholds and Allah who gives abundantly, and it is to Him that you will return.”²⁴⁶

These verses conclude with,

﴿الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

“Those who give, out of their own possessions, by night and by day, in private and in public, will have their reward with their Lord: no fear for

245 Ibid

246 Al-Baqarah: 245

them, nor will they grieve.”²⁴⁷

Immediately afterwards, the verse of usury is mentioned,

﴿الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ﴾

“But those who take usury will rise up on the Day of Resurrection like someone tormented by Satan’s touch...”²⁴⁸

This is an example of an evil loan. It brings destruction to the one engaged in it and the threat of divine warfare. What comparison is there then between blessed wealth and the wealth of usury that is devoid of all blessing? Rather, the latter brings grief and sorrow, corrupts communities and nations, and starts wars between them. Due to its evil, it is no wonder that Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) declare war on it,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ذُرُوءَ مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ﴾

“O you who believe, beware of Allah: give up any outstanding dues from usury, if you are true believers. If you do not, then be warned of war from Allah and His Messenger...”²⁴⁹

Allah then mentions the third type of loan which is the permissible loan as long as it meets its conditions,

﴿إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَآكْتُبُوهُ﴾

247 Al-Baqarah: 274

248 Al-Baqarah: 275

249 Al-Baqarah: 278-279

“...when you contract a debt for a stated term, put it down in writing...”²⁵⁰

These are three types of loan, so choose the one that will allow you to meet Allah with success and will grant you His mercy and forgiveness. Know that the true day of payment for all three loans will be the day of standing before the True Judge, on the Day of Accounting. Each person is already indebted to Allah for His favours of the soul, body, wealth and other blessings. These must be repaid on the Day of Accounting. We will be asked how we used them? On that Day, all of the conditions will be met for repayment. The angels will have recorded everything and will testify before the True Judge, from whom nothing is hidden and who does not oppress even a mustard seed,

﴿وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوْا مَافِ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ يَحْصِبْكُمْ بِهٖ اللّٰهُ^ط﴾

“...whether you reveal or conceal your thoughts, Allah will call you to account for them...”²⁵¹

Thus, the verse of loans is the longest of the Qur'an as the day of repayment will be the longest of days. On that Day, each person will receive what they put in,

﴿لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ^ق﴾

“...each gains whatever good it has done, and suffers its bad...”²⁵²

250 Al-Baqarah: 282

251 Al-Baqarah: 284

252 Al-Baqarah: 286

You will stand before Allah whose mercy has overcome His anger. He will show mercy towards forgetfulness and mistakes, and pardon what was too burdensome and difficult to accomplish. He will display His perfect pardon, forgiveness and mercy towards those who worshipped Him alone, particularly on that Day.

Therefore, a general look at the verses allows you to see the three types of loans. The first is a good loan which is charity. The second group of verses speak of the evil loan which is usury, and third group of verses speak about the permissible loan. Thus, allowing you to see the connection between these verses.

2. *Sūrah al-Baqarah* & Going Towards Allah

In this chapter, we have verses of bequest, then verses of fasting, then verses of *Ḥajj* and then verses of *Jihād*. What is the connection?

If we were to reflect upon these verses and take a broader look at them, we would see that they all speak about journeying towards Allah. The first verses are about the bequest of the one passing away, who is then travelling to Allah with his soul. *Ḥajj* is a journey to Allah with the body. *Jihād* is also a journey to Allah with the body and soul. But, where does fasting fit within this?

One who's in love always yearns for their beloved. They patiently wait for the time when they can see them. The beloved here is Allah, so how can one travel towards Him?

Travelling to Allah is done in one of two ways:

- a. In the worldly sense which is with the body such as in the journey of *Ḥajj*
- b. In the next world with both body and soul, through *jihād*

However, to prepare for these two types of travel, a person must train, prepare and test their piety so as to see how well they can bear these journeys. They must also find a way to cleanse their record of sins and spiritual filth so that they can travel freely and lightly. Furthermore, they must constantly hold themselves to account and be mindful of mistakes during their travel so as to meet Allah in a pure state. All of these requirements are met through fasting,

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾﴾

“...fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those who came before you, so that you may be mindful of Allah.”²⁵³

The one who withholds themselves from permissible things, is more likely to stay away from unlawful things concerning the lives, wealth and honour of others. As such, fasting is the test by which it is known how well someone is prepared for the two journeys and how pure their records are. Fasting helps with self-accounting, attaining piety and giving preference to what Allah loves over personal desires. When Allah commands that someone leaves their desires, they happily hear and obey with love,

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾﴾

“...fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those who came before you, so that you may be mindful of Allah.”²⁵⁴

During the day, they cleanse their heart from the permissible desires of eating, drinking and marital relations. At night, they

253 Al-Baqarah: 183

254 Ibid

turn to their Lord in prayer and asking, showing humbleness before Him. They spend their nights displaying their love for their Creator,

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَا فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

“If My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I respond to those who call Me, so let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may be guided.”²⁵⁵

They invoke their Lord, calling for His pardon and forgiveness before they travel to Him, lest His doors be closed upon them. They say, “Our Lord, we have thrown ourselves before Your door, so do not expel us, for if You do then we have no power or might except with You.”

Fasting in Ramadan in the correct manner allows a person to be forgiven, “May the one who witnesses Ramadan and is not forgiven be in loss.”²⁵⁶ The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, “Allah frees people from the Fire, every night.”²⁵⁷ After this, the journey of love to Allah can begin in *Hajj*, the season of which begins in Shawwāl, the month after Ramadan which is the first of the months of pilgrimage,

﴿ الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ ۖ ﴾

*"The pilgrimage takes place during the prescribed months."*²⁵⁸

255 Al-Baqarah: 186

256 Collected by al-Bazzār, no. 1405, and al-Tirmidhī, no. 3545 and al-Ḥākim, vol. 1, p. 549

257 Collected by al-Tirmidhī, no. 682, authenticated by Ibn Khuzaymah, al-Hākim and al-Albānī

258 Al-Baqarah: 197

The prescribed months being Shawwāl, Dhul-Qa‘dah and Dhul-Hijjah. Thus, the months of Ḥajj are linked to Ramadan, and the verses of Ḥajj are linked to the verses of fasting and Ramadan,

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ﴾

“They ask you about crescent moons. Say, ‘They show the times appointed for people, and for the pilgrimage.’”²⁵⁹

Following on from this are the verses of *jihād* which is the journey of the body and soul to Allah.

3. The Verses of Divorce and Preserving the Prayer

In *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, after Allah details the rulings of marriage and divorce, Allah says before the conclusion of this passage,

﴿حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ۖ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا﴾

“Take care to do your prayers and the middle prayer, and stand before Allah in devotion. If you are in danger, pray when you are out walking or riding...”²⁶⁰

Why are verses about prayer mentioned in the midst of verses concerning divorce?

Upon reflection, we see that marriage is about the bond between a man and woman, whereas divorce is the breaking of that bond. Likewise, prayer is the best bond between a person and their Lord.

259 Al-Baqarah: 189

260 Al-Baqarah: 238-239

This bond should always be preserved even in times of war; this is the connection.

The worries that emerge from marital discord are amongst the greatest that a spouse experiences in their lifetime. This is because the husband and wife are splitting and children may be involved so the family breaks down. These hardships come about as a result of a person's own doing, as when their link with Allah is weakened, it reflects in their family bonds,

﴿وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ﴾

“Whatever misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your own hands have done – Allah forgives much.”²⁶¹

Worldly hardships can be caused by sins and being distanced from Allah, or due to leaving what is best or doing what is disliked. Therefore, self-accounting and seeking forgiveness is necessary. This is why Nūḥ said to his people when advising them as to how to remove drought,

﴿اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١﴾ يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِدْرَارًا ﴿٢﴾ وَضَحْدَكُمْ ذُرًّا مَوْنًا ﴿٣﴾ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿٤﴾﴾

“...Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is ever forgiving. He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you; He will give you wealth and sons; He will provide you with gardens and rivers.”²⁶²

Hūd said something similar to his people,

261 Al-Shūrā: 30

262 Nūḥ: 10-12

﴿اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ﴾

*“...ask forgiveness from your Lord, and return to Him. He will send down for you rain in abundance from the sky, and give you extra strength.”*²⁶³

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to his people,

﴿وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُعْطِكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ﴾^ص

*“Ask your Lord for forgiveness, then turn back to Him. He will grant you wholesome enjoyment until an appointed time, and give His grace to everyone who has merit.”*²⁶⁴

One of the scholars of the *salaf* said, “I know when I have sinned from the dealings of my spouse and riding animal.” Perhaps someone leaves home in the morning with their spouse in the best of spirits, only to return in the evening and everything has changed for no apparent reason. However, upon reflection, this person has sinned during the day. Similarly, you have a new car that breaks down, whereas older cars around you are working fine. Again, when our connection with Allah is broken, our worldly affairs are broken. We then turn back to Allah and seek His forgiveness.

This is why ‘Ā’ishah said, “If the Prophet (ﷺ) was upset, he would hasten to the prayer.”²⁶⁵ He would turn to the prayer seeking repentance, forgiveness, turning to Allah in humbleness and submission, complaining to Allah of his griefs and sorrows,

263 Hūd: 52

264 Hūd: 3

265 Collected by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd, no. 1319

﴿إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ﴾

“I plead my grief and sorrow before Allah.”²⁶⁶

Thus, verses of prayer in the midst of verses regarding marriage and divorce, is a sign that marital discord is as a result of our own sins. We should then turn back to Allah in forgiveness and repentance, and the best way to do this is through prayer. By strengthening our connection with Allah, we strengthen our connection with others. This is a second connection.

A third connection is that marital discord overcomes all other thoughts. These thoughts and worries increase when each spouse is resting during the day or night. A person then replays all these thoughts from the beginning to the end, only to increase in more worry and sorrow. They only fall asleep just before the ‘Aṣr prayer or before the Fajr prayer in a restless sleep. In turn, they end up missing their prayers. A worried individual who eventually falls asleep, has a deeper sleep that then leads to missing the prayer time, and thus they neglect their prayers,

﴿حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ﴾

“Take care to do your prayers...”²⁶⁷

Allah says,

﴿وَقَوْمُوا لِلَّهِ قَتَاتِينَ﴾

266 Yūsuf: 86

267 Al-Baqarah: 238

*“...and stand before Allah in devotion.”*²⁶⁸

Be attentive in your prayers, and don't let Satan busy you with worldly thoughts during the prayer. Don't be distracted by focusing on what you said and what they said, and if only I had said or they had said. By the end of the prayer, you leave with no contemplation, not knowing what you read or how much. This is why Allah then says,

﴿فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرَجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا﴾

*“If you are in danger, pray when you are out walking or riding...”*²⁶⁹

Even in the state of war, when blood is being spilt and people being wounded – a time more difficult than marital discord – you must still pray with attentiveness. Therefore, a lesser state such as marital disharmony should be more so.

Therefore, the first group of verses speaks about the relationship between spouses. The second group of verses speaks about the relationship between a person and Allah and how that impacts other relationships. Thus, between the two topics we can see a clear correlation.

268 Ibid

269 Al-Baqarah: 239

Chapter Eleven

Summary Followed by Detail & Vice Versa

Some topics are mentioned briefly and then detailed later. Sometimes, there may be a gap between the summarised and detailed verses. If one doesn't pay attention to this, it may pass them by.

1. *Sūrah al-Baqarah & Ḥajj and Jihād*

In *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, Allah details the rulings of *Ḥajj* in about two pages, beginning with the verse,

﴿وَاتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ﴾

“Complete the pilgrimages, major and minor, for the sake of Allah.”²⁷⁰

It ends with the verse,

²⁷⁰ Al-Baqarah: 196

﴿وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ﴾

*“Remember Allah on the appointed days...”*²⁷¹

Allah then goes onto the topic of Jihād,

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ ۖ﴾

*“Fighting is ordained for you, though you dislike it.”*²⁷²

However, between the two topics, there is a gap of about two pages with other verses, beginning with,

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ

وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ۖ﴾

*“There is [a kind of] man whose views on the life of this world may please you, he even calls on Allah to witness what is in his heart, yet he is the bitterest of opponents.”*²⁷³

What is the connection?

Allah briefly mentions both topics together at the beginning of the passage that speaks about the rulings of Hajj and Jihād,

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ ۚ﴾

“They ask you about crescent moons. Say, ‘They show the times

271 Al-Baqarah: 203

272 Al-Baqarah: 216

273 Al-Baqarah: 204

appointed for people, and for the pilgrimage.”²⁷⁴

Allah then says,

﴿وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَقْتُلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا﴾

“Fight in Allah’s cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits...”²⁷⁵

Both are types of journeys towards Allah; the first with the body that is followed by the spirit, and the second with the soul that is followed by the body. This is the connection between the two topics. Allah goes onto detail this but there is a gap before this is done.

Thus, by being alert to the two topics mentioned briefly, you see the connection between the two when they are later mentioned in detail. Furthermore, by knowing how the two topics are linked, we can see the relevance of the topic mentioned in the gap between the summary and detailed verses. In this case, that a person’s inner and outer states must be in conformity as they travel to Allah. Some people’s inner states differ from their outer states,

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ
وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ﴾

“There is [a kind of] man whose views on the life of this world may please you, he even calls on Allah to witness what is in his heart, yet he is the bitterest of opponents.”²⁷⁶

274 Al-Baqarah: 189

275 Al-Baqarah: 190

276 Al-Baqarah: 204

Another group is described as,

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ﴾

“But there is also a kind of man who gives his life away to please Allah...”²⁷⁷

Thus, there inner and outer states are the same as this person travels towards Allah, looking forward to meeting Him,

﴿هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلُلٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ﴾

“Are these people waiting for Allah to come to them in the shadows of the clouds...”²⁷⁸

They are not distracted from this noble goal by the worldly life,

﴿رُزِقَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا﴾

“The life of this world is made to seem glamorous to the disbelievers...”²⁷⁹

They are patient in the pursuit of this goal,

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَّثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَهْمِرِينَ ۚ وَالصَّالُّونَ هُمْ يُرِيدُونَ﴾

277 Al-Baqarah: 207

278 Al-Baqarah: 210

279 Al-Baqarah: 212

“Allah took a pledge from the Children of Israel. We made twelve leaders arise among them, and Allah said, ‘I am with you: if you keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, believe in My messengers and support them, and lend Allah a good loan...”²⁸²

The connection with the next verse is clear,

﴿فَمَا نَقْضِهِمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ﴾

“But they broke their pledge...”²⁸³

The broken pledge refers to the previous verse. The verse about following the Prophet (ﷺ), wherein Allah says,

﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ﴾

“O People of the Book, Our Messenger has come to make clear to you...”²⁸⁴

This is in explanation of the part from the verse of summary, “...believe in My messengers...” This obedience to the Messenger should be without going to extremes or transgressing. It should not be the extreme of the Christians when they made ‘Isā into a god,

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ﴾

“Those who say, ‘Allah is the Messiah, the son of Maryam,’ are defying the truth...”²⁸⁵

282 Al-Mā'idah: 12

283 Al-Mā'idah: 13

284 Al-Mā'idah: 15

285 Al-Mā'idah: 17

Nor should it be the extreme of the Jews when they refused to follow Mūsā and enter into the Blessed Land. Similarly, do not transgress as they did when they envied the position of the Prophet (ﷺ) and attempted to kill him. In doing so, they followed in the footsteps of the son of Ādam when he was jealous of his brother and so killed him. Allah then says after mentioning this story,

﴿مَنْ أَجْلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أُوتِيَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

ذِكْرًا أَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا﴾

“On account of [his deed], We decreed to the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a person – unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land – that if anyone kills a person, it is as if he kills all mankind...”²⁸⁶

We then have verses that speak about the punishment of armed robbery and theft, because both are issues related to wealth and its preservation. This fits with the part from the verse that summarises all of these points, “...pay the prescribed alms...” Following this, the verses that mention judging by what Allah has revealed and absolving oneself of allegiance to the Jews and Christians, is taken from the part of the verse, “...and support them...” Meaning that you will support My Messengers, ally yourselves to them and fight their enemies.

The remaining topics explain the part of the verse that summarises all these points, “...and lend Allah a good loan...” It means to spend your lives and wealth in the path of Allah as opposed to spending it in the fulfilment of desires. Anything other than this is in opposition to giving a good loan to Allah, and can manifest itself in hate, love, enmity, sin, and making things permissible or impermissible.

An example of this hate is the Jews who killed their Prophets,

﴿فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا يَقْتُلُونَ﴾²⁸⁷

“...they accused some of lying and put others to death.”²⁸⁷

An example of the above in love is how the Christians gave divinity to ‘Īsā,

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَلَاثَةٌ﴾

“Those people who say that Allah is the third of three are defying the truth.”²⁸⁸

An example of this is also found in making lawful foods unlawful and vice versa,

﴿لَا تَحْزَنْ مُوَاطِّنَتْ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا﴾

“...do not forbid the good things Allah has made lawful to you - do not exceed the limits.”²⁸⁹

Another example in sin is by indulging in intoxicants, gambling and hunting while in the sacred state of performing pilgrimage,

﴿لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ﴾

287 Al-Mā'idah: 70

288 Al-Mā'idah: 73

289 Al-Mā'idah: 87

“...do not kill game while you are in the state of consecration [for pilgrimage].”²⁹⁰

Thus, by noticing the summarised points, we can understand the connection between the different verses.

3. *Sūrah al-A‘rāf* & The Change in Topic

In *Sūrah al-A‘rāf*, Allah mentions the stories of a number of Prophets. He mentions the stories of Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ, Shu‘ayb and then the story of Mūsā with Pharaoh which is preceded by a gap of a page and a half. Why is there a change of topic? Why isn’t the story of Mūsā mentioned immediately after the story of Shu‘ayb?

Before the first story narrated, Allah says in the preceding verse,

﴿وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ بَنَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبَتْ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا كَدًّا﴾

“Vegetation comes out of good land in abundance, by the will of its Lord, but out of bad land only scantily...”²⁹¹

After this verse, Allah mentions all the stories. In these stories, Allah mentions the evil these Prophets faced from their nations. However, that evil is of two types. The first type is the evil of their enemies as found in all of the stories with the exception of Mūsā’s. The second type is evil not only from enemies, but at times from some of the followers of the Prophet as found in the story of Mūsā. Mūsā faced challenges from his enemies in the form of Pharaoh and his supporters, and from some of his own followers.

290 Al-Mā’idah: 95

291 Al-A‘rāf: 58

In between the other stories and the story of Mūsā, Allah warns Quraysh and the Arabs from becoming enemies of the Prophet (ﷺ), lest their ending should be like those others who opposed their Prophets. Instead, they should obey the Prophet (ﷺ),

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

“If the people of those towns had believed and been mindful of Allah, We would have showered them with blessings from the heaven and earth...”²⁹²

At the same time, Allah warns the followers of the Prophet (ﷺ) from harming him,

﴿وَلَوْ يَدْرِى الَّذِينَ يَرْتَابُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ عِندِ أَهْلِهَا أَن لَّوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَصْبَحُوا دُخَانًا يَرْفَعُهُمْ وَسَبَّحَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ﴾

“Is it not clear to those who inherit the land from former generations that We can punish them too for their sins if We will? And seal up their hearts so that they cannot hear?”²⁹³

This is mentioned as a preface to the example to be given. Allah then gives a clear example of people who harmed their Prophet after the initial harm suffered at the hands of their enemy. All of this after Mūsā helped save his people and Allah inherited them the land,

﴿وَأَوْزَنَّا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسَاصِعُونَ مَشْرِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغْرِبَهَا الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا﴾

292 Al-A‘rāf: 96

293 Al-A‘rāf: 100

“And We made those who had been oppressed succeed to both the east and the west of the land that We had blessed.”²⁹⁴

Therefore, Allah mentions in the brief introduction the general principle; the evil that emanates from both enemies and some followers when they oppose the Messengers. This principle is followed by detailed examples. Thus, by noticing the summarised points, we can understand the connection between the different verses.

294 Al-A‘rāf: 137

Chapter Twelve

Repeated Phrases

Repeated or similar phrases and words are at times found in verses that seem to be disconnected. However, by reflecting on these phrases a connection can be made.

1. *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* & The Questioning of the Messengers

In *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, after the verse of bequest, Allah mentions the Prophet 'Īsā and the favours and signs he received. We are told of the story of the disciples and the feast from heaven, as well as the questioning of 'Īsā by Allah,

﴿أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّيَ إِلَهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ﴾

“...did you say to people, ‘Take me and my mother as two gods alongside Allah?’”²⁹⁵

What is the connection?

295 Al-Mā'idah: 116

We can see the repetition of the word ‘testimony’ or ‘witness’ in the two groups of verses. In the verse of bequest,

﴿شَهِدَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِذَا أَحْضَرَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتَ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ﴾

*“...when death approaches one of you, let two just men from among you act as witnesses to the making of a bequest...”*²⁹⁶

﴿وَلَا تَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ﴾

*“We will not hide Allah’s testimony...”*²⁹⁷

﴿فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا﴾

*“Let them swear by Allah, ‘Our testimony is truer than theirs...”*²⁹⁸

﴿ذَلِكَ أَذْفَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهَا﴾

*“That will make it more likely they will give true and proper testimony...”*²⁹⁹

We also see the repetition of this word in the second passage concerning the Prophet ‘Īsā,

﴿وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

296 Al-Mā'idah: 106

297 Ibid

298 Al-Mā'idah: 107

299 Al-Mā'idah: 108

*“...and bear witness that we are Muslims.”*³⁰⁰

﴿مَا وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ﴾^ص

*“I was a witness over them during my time among them.”*³⁰¹

﴿وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾

*“You are witness to all things.”*³⁰²

The theme of *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* is to preserve the divine pledge, that is to hold onto the three foundations of worshipping Allah alone, following the Prophet (ﷺ) and spiritual purification. This divine pledge is with Allah, and He has made you witnesses to it. It is a greater pledge than the bequest made by a dying person regarding their wealth.

Allah has given a number of evidences and attested numerous witnesses to this divine pledge. From them are the witnesses from the People of the Scripture, whom Allah warned against concealing their testimony,

﴿وَلَا تَكْمُرُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ﴾

*“We will not hide Allah’s testimony.”*³⁰³

300 Al-Mā'idah: 111

301 Al-Mā'idah: 117

302 Ibid

303 Al-Mā'idah: 106

Allah will question you about this pledge in the presence of all witnesses. Further, He will question the Prophets and hold them to account for it,

﴿يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ﴾

*“On the Day when Allah assembles all the messengers and asks, ‘What response did you receive?’”*³⁰⁴

The one who breaks this pledge and conceals it is more sinful than the one who conceals the bequest of the dying. Their punishment will be more severe than those who broke the pledge of the heavenly feast and who were promised a severe torment,

﴿فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾^(١١٥)

*“...will be punished with a punishment that I will not inflict on anyone else in the world.”*³⁰⁵

Salvation is only for those who uphold their pledge, fulfil it, are truthful to Allah and preserve the three foundations by fulfilling the terms of the divine pledge,

﴿قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْقَوْلُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾

“Allah will say, ‘This is a Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness. They will have Gardens graced with flowing streams, there to remain for ever. Allah is pleased with them and they with Him: that is

304 Al-Mā'idah: 109

305 Al-Mā'idah: 115

the supreme triumph.”³⁰⁶

Thus, repeated words help to understand the connection between verses.

2. *Sūrah al-Nisā’* & Evil Made Public

Allah says,

﴿لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسَّوِّءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ﴾

*“Allah does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been oppressed.”*³⁰⁷

He then says,

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ﴾

*“As for those who ignore Allah and His messengers and want to make a distinction between them...”*³⁰⁸

Allah then mentions the evil of the statement made by the Jews,

﴿أَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً﴾

*“...show us Allah face to face...”*³⁰⁹

306 Al-Mā'idah: 119

307 Al-Nisā': 148

308 Al-Nisā': 150

309 Al-Nisā': 153

They also worshipped the calf, broke the divine pledge, attempted to kill ‘Īsā and worked with usury. What is the connection?

Upon reflection, we notice that the word ‘oppression’ is repeated,

﴿لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ﴾³¹⁰

*“Allah does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been oppressed.”*³¹⁰

In the verse about the People of the Scripture,

﴿فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ﴾³¹¹

*“...and were struck by the thunderbolt for their oppression.”*³¹¹

﴿فَظَلَمَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَمًا عَلَيْهِمْ طَبِيتٌ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ﴾³¹²

*“For the oppression done by the Jews, We forbade them certain good things that had been permitted to them before...”*³¹²

The relevance here is the permissibility of backbiting or speaking about oppression if you are the oppressed or have been wronged,

﴿لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ﴾

310 Al-Nisā’: 148

311 Al-Nisā’: 153

312 Al-Nisā’: 160

“Allah does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been oppressed.”³¹³

Therefore, it is permissible to speak about the oppression of the People of the Scripture, for they,

﴿وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ﴾

“...want to make a distinction between Allah and His messengers, saying, ‘We believe in some but not in others...’³¹⁴

They further said,

﴿أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ﴾

“Show us Allah face to face, and were struck by the thunderbolt for their oppression. Even after clear revelations had come down to them, they took the calf as an object of worship...”³¹⁵

They had given pledged but then broke them,

﴿فِيمَا نَقَضُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكَفَرُوا بِهِمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ﴾

“And so for breaking their pledge, for rejecting Allah’s revelations, for unjustly killing their Prophets, for saying, ‘Our minds are closed’ ...”³¹⁶

313 Al-Nisā’: 148

314 Al-Nisā’: 150

315 Al-Nisā’: 153

316 Al-Nisā’: 155

They attempted to kill ‘Īsā and boasted about having done so. They dealt in usury and devoured the wealth of others unjustly. Such people should be exposed due to their evil and oppression. If you do not expose them, then their corruption will afflict your nations and others. Thus, repeated words help to understand the connection between verses.

3. *Sūrah al-Zumar* & Spiritual Nourishment

Allah says,

﴿الَّذِينَ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا﴾

*“Have you not considered that Allah sends water down from the sky, guides it along to form springs in the earth, and then, with it, brings forth vegetation of various colours, which later withers, turns yellow before your eyes...”*³¹⁷

Allah then mentions the Qur’an after this,

﴿قَوْلٍ لِّلْقَلَسِيةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾ ﴿٣١٨﴾ *اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا*

*“Alas for those whose hearts harden at the mention of Allah! They have clearly lost their way. Allah has sent down the most beautiful of all speeches...”*³¹⁸

What is the connection?

317 Al-Zumar: 21

318 Al-Zumar: 22-23

The word ‘sent down’ is repeated in both verses. In the first, we have rain being sent down to bring life to the earth, and in the second we have the Qur’an being sent down to give life to the heart. This is why we should constantly moisten our tongues and hearts with His remembrance so as to reenergise our love and servitude. Our love will then blossom with many colours and in many forms. Otherwise it will become barren and dry with forgetfulness and heedlessness like withered leaves and a hardened heart,

﴿الَّذِينَ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ الْمَاءَ فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا﴾³¹⁹

*“Have you not considered that Allah sends water down from the sky, guides it along to form springs in the earth, and then, with it, brings forth vegetation of various colours, which later withers, turns yellow before your eyes, and is crumbled to dust at His command?”*³¹⁹

Whoever has been blessed by Allah to be His sincere servant, has been honoured with lush gardens of divine love. The one who turns away from this will have those blessings snatched away as Allah says,

﴿ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا﴾³²⁰

*“...and is crumbled to dust at His command.”*³²⁰

Here, the consequence is described as coming from Allah, whereas in *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd*,

﴿ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا﴾³²¹

319 Al-Zumar: 21

320 Ibid

“...and become stubble.”³²¹

Such people’s hearts reach the high level of sincerity and true love. From its signs is an open heart and an illuminated face when Allah’s words are heard,

﴿أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ﴾

“What about the one whose heart Allah has opened in devotion to Him, so that he walks in light from his Lord?”³²²

Both my skin and heart soften and submit to this love, seeking contentment after first being awed by this speech,

﴿تَقشَعْرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ﴾

“...that causes the skin of those in awe of their Lord to shiver. Then their skins and their hearts soften at the mention of Allah...”³²³

This is in contrast to the one who is invited to Allah’s speech and His oneness but turns away and disbelieves due to their hardened heart. On the Day of Judgement their punishment will be the Fire. On that Day, they will try their utmost to escape whilst their hands are chained. How will they then escape? Look at such a face that is chained but trying to avoid the Fire? You reap what you sow,

﴿أَفَمَنْ يَتَّقِ بِوَجْهِهِ سُوَاءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ۚ﴾

321 Al-Ḥadīd: 20

322 Al-Zumar: 22

323 Al-Zumar: 23

“What about the one who will only have his bare face to protect him from his terrible suffering on the Day of Resurrection?”³²⁴

Such a person in this life, would either disbelieve,

﴿كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ﴾

“Others before them also disbelieved...”³²⁵

Or be in disgrace,

﴿فَإِذَا قَهَّمُ اللَّهُ الْحَرَبَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾

“Allah gave them the punishment of disgrace in this world to taste”³²⁶

And a heart that is in disarray and dispute,

﴿رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَاكِسُونَ﴾

“...a man who has for his masters several partners at odds with each other...”³²⁷

Such a person disliked to hear about *tawhīd*. Similarly, Allah says in *Sūrah al-Naḥl*,

﴿وَمَا أَرْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لَتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

324 Al-Zumar: 24

325 Al-Zumar: 25

326 Al-Zumar: 26

327 Al-Zumar: 29

“We have sent down the Scripture to you only to make clear to them what they differ about, and as guidance and mercy to those who believe.”³²⁸

Allah then says,

﴿وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا﴾

“It is Allah who sends water down from the sky and with it revives the earth when it is dead.”³²⁹

Here the concept of ‘sending down’ is also repeated. In *Sūrah al-Rūm*, the word ‘send’ is also repeated in three consecutive verses,

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ﴾

“Another of His signs is that He sends out the winds bearing good news, giving you a taste of His grace...”³³⁰

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا﴾

“Before you, We sent messengers...”³³¹

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ﴾

328 Al-Naḥl: 64

329 Al-Naḥl: 65

330 Al-Rūm: 46

331 Al-Rūm: 47

“It is Allah who sends out the winds, they stir up the clouds; He spreads them over the skies as He pleases...”³³²

The Messengers are like the good wind. They bring sustenance, goodness, blessings, guidance, mercy and glad tidings.

Thus, repeated words help to understand the connection between verses.

332 Al-Rūm: 48

Chapter Thirteen

Repetition of the Topic After Other Verses

At times whilst reading the Qur'an, the topic of a verse may be hard to determine. However, when continuing to read, the same topic is repeated again, whereby it can then be seen that the verse in between the repetition was to enhance the overall message and emphasise the point further.

1. *Sūrah al-Baqarah* & The Verse Concerning Intoxicants and Gambling

Allah mentions the verse of charity,

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ^ط قُلْ مَا أُنْفِقُ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِأُولَئِكَ

*“They ask you what they should give. Say, ‘Whatever you give should be for parents...”*³³³

333 Al-Baqarah: 215

Following this is the verse of fighting,

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ﴾

*“Fighting is ordained for you, though you dislike it.”*³³⁴

Allah then says,

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾

*“They ask you about intoxicants and gambling: say, ‘There is great sin in both...’”*³³⁵

What is the connection?

If we continue to read, we see that the topic of charity will be repeated again,

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَعَةٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَاثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ الْغَنَى﴾

*“They ask you about intoxicants and gambling: say, ‘There is great sin in both, and some benefit for people: the sin is greater than the benefit.’ They ask you what they should give: say, ‘Give what you can spare...’”*³³⁶

The topic therefore is to give in charity and spend in the cause of Allah. The opponents of *jihād* have a number of objections and excuses saying that it’s crazy for a person to spend their money

334 Al-Baqarah: 216

335 Al-Baqarah: 219

336 Ibid

on what may lead to their own demise. The divine response to this comes: true foolishness is to spend money on intoxicants which takes away a person's intellect, or on gambling where a person can lose all of their money in a single hour,

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾

“They ask you about intoxicants and gambling: say, ‘There is great sin in both...’”³³⁷

Is it not better that one should spend their wealth for the love of Allah, seeking nearness to Him, even if it leads to martyrdom? Thus, we see that what is mentioned in between the repeated topics is to further enhance the message and emphasise the point, that here is charity. Therefore, the repetition helps make the connection.

2. *Sūrah al-Nisā'* & The Verse of Purification

In *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, Allah enjoins upon us that we should show goodness to others so as to bring harmony amongst people,

﴿وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ﴾

“...be good to our parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy...”³³⁸

Allah warns against evil characteristics such as stinginess and what creates enmity and hatred between people, that leads to

337 Ibid

338 Al-Nisā': 36

disunity. Allah then says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرُؤُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآنتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ﴾

*“O you who believe, do not come anywhere near the prayer if you are intoxicated, not until you know what you are saying...”*³³⁹

What is the connection?

If you were to read the verse after the one on purification, you will find that the topic of refraining from bad character is repeated,

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يَشَرُّونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يُضِلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ۖ﴾

*“Have you not considered how those who were given a share of the Scripture purchase misguidance and want you, too, to lose the right path?”*³⁴⁰

Hence, we know that the verse of purification came to further elucidate the topic mentioned before and after it. True unity can only take place when people communicate, and communication requires good conduct. Therefore, displaying good character in dealing with Allah helps to unite the hearts, as He alone is the One who brings about unity. Then displaying good character in dealing with others helps as people are naturally grateful to those who show them kindness,

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَالَّذِينَ أَحْسَنَآؤُا بِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجَبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ الْجَبِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ

339 Al-Nisā': 43

340 Al-Nisā': 44

“Worship Allah; join nothing with Him. Be good to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to neighbours near and far, to travellers in needs, and to your slaves.”³⁴¹

Healthy relationships require leaving off cheating people, being arrogant and miserly with wealth and knowledge,

﴿الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾

“Who are miserly and order other people to be the same, hiding the bounty Allah has given them...”³⁴²

A miserly person who gives charity only does so to show off, except for the few Allah has mercy upon. Likewise, connecting with Allah and people requires a clean mind, intellect and heart,

﴿لَا تَقْرُؤُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَانْتُمْ سُكَرَىٰ حَتَّى تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ﴾

“...do not come anywhere near the prayer if you are intoxicated, not until you know what you are saying...”³⁴³

Connecting with Allah requires a pure inner and outer state,

﴿وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِ سَبِيلٍ حَتَّى تَغْتَسِلُوا﴾

“...nor if you are in a state of major ritual impurity – though you may pass through the mosque – not until you have bathed...”³⁴⁴

341 Al-Nisā': 36

342 Al-Nisā': 37

343 Al-Nisā': 43

344 Ibid

Similarly, with people, one must have a pure outer state and a clean inner state. Connecting with Allah is done when the face and hands touch the ground, out of reverence and servitude with exemplary character and purity,

﴿فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ﴾

“...and wipe your face and hands...”³⁴⁵

Likewise, with people, one must display a caring hand and joyful face. We must avoid jealousy, wanting bad for others and an evil intention,

﴿وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا السَّبِيلَ﴾

“...and want you, too, to lose the right path?”³⁴⁶

We stay away from bad speech, evil words and being two-faced in our dealings with others,

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لِيَّا بِالسِّنَتِهِمْ﴾

“...they say, ‘We hear and disobey,’ and ‘Listen’ [adding the insult] ‘May you not hear,’ and ‘Look at us,’ twisting it abusively with their tongues...”³⁴⁷

One must also stay away from trickery, cheating and false testimony, betraying people’s trusts and the bonds of brotherhood,

345 Ibid

346 Al-Nisā’: 44

347 Al-Nisā’: 46

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا﴾

“Allah commands you to return things entrusted to you to their rightful owners...”³⁴⁸

Essentially, a person should be trustworthy, honest and good in their dealings with their brothers and with Allah. Thus, we see that what is mentioned in between the repeated topics, the verse of purification, is to further enhance the message and emphasise the point, that here is good character in relationships. Therefore, the repetition helps make the connection.

3. *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* & The Orphaning of the Prophet (ﷺ)

In *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, Allah mentions the status of the Prophet (ﷺ),

﴿مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ﴾

“Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men; he is Allah’s Messenger and the seal of the Prophets.”³⁴⁹

Allah then says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۖ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۖ﴾

“Believers, remember Allah often. And glorify Him morning and evening.”³⁵⁰

348 Al-Nisā’: 58

349 Al-Aḥzāb: 40

350 Al-Aḥzāb: 41-42

What is the connection?

If we were to continue reading, we would notice that the verses repeat the topic of the status of the Prophet (ﷺ),

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۝۱۹ وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ۝۲۰﴾

“O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and warning. As one who calls people to Allah by His leave, as a light-giving lamp.”³⁵¹

Therefore, the verse in between the repetition of topics is to further emphasise the point. The Prophet (ﷺ) grew up as an orphan. He was not only an orphan but his male children also passed away, so that Allah could complete his position as His Messenger and the seal of the Prophets,

﴿مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۚ﴾

“Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men; he is Allah’s Messenger and the seal of the Prophets.”³⁵²

He is the single leader of mankind and Allah is his protector and guardian, and has made him the seal of the Prophets. However, beware of raising him above his station as the Christians did with ‘Īsā,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۝۱۱ وَسِعْهُ بُرُودٌ وَأَصِيلًا ۝۱۲﴾

351 Al-Aḥzāb: 45-46

352 Al-Aḥzāb: 40

*“Believers, remember Allah often. And glorify Him morning and evening.”*³⁵³

Despite this, you should give the Prophet (ﷺ) his due right and honour him as he deserves,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۝ وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ۝﴾

*“O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and warning. As one who calls people to Allah by His leave, as a light-giving lamp.”*³⁵⁴

Hence, there is no extreme in either direction. Do not go overboard or demean his station. Therefore, the verses in between are to remove this potential danger of raising the Prophet (ﷺ) over and above his position. Therefore, the repetition helps make the connection, and the verse mentioned in between, is to further enhance the message and emphasise the point.

353 Al-Aḥzāb: 41-42

354 Al-Aḥzāb: 45-46

Chapter Fourteen

Opposites or Similar Words

The presence of words or phrases that are opposites or similar to one another can help you to make the connection between verses.

1. Light & Birds

Allah says in the verse of light,

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

*“Allah is the Light of the heavens and earth.”*³⁵⁵

He then says,

﴿أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ﴾

*“Or like shadows in a deep sea...”*³⁵⁶

355 Al-Nūr: 35

356 Al-Nūr: 40

This is followed by the verse,

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَفَّاتٍ﴾

*“Do you not see that all those who are in the heavens and earth praise Allah, as do the birds with wings outstretched?”*³⁵⁷

Why is the bird mentioned in this context?

The theme of *Sūrah al-Nūr* is how modesty can bring divine light. When a person is modest, Allah blesses them with His divine light,

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ﴾

*“Allah is the Light of the heavens and earth. His Light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp...”*³⁵⁸

If a person wants to increase in light and for their face to be illuminated, and for this divine light to continue with them, then they should regularly attend the mosque and attach themselves to it. Therein, they should pray and remember Allah’s Name which is the essence of all light, especially in the mornings and evenings,

﴿فِي يُبُورٍ أَدْبَرَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَرْفَعُوهُنَّ لَكُنَّ فِيهَا أَسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْأَعْدُ وَالْأَصَالِ﴾

*“Allah has ordained that they be raised high and that His name be remembered in them, morning and evening.”*³⁵⁹

357 Al-Nūr: 41

358 Al-Nūr: 35

359 Al-Nūr: 36

As for a person who is immodest, running after their sexual desires, chasing after women, thinking that they will satiate this desire, they will not,

﴿يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً﴾

“...the thirsty person thinks there will be water...”³⁶⁰

Instead, they are chasing a mirage. They will continue to be in pain and thirst until they meet Allah, panting. He will then hold them to account. For them, this world is perpetual darkness and they tumble over and over in it. In it, their face and heart are darkened,

﴿ظَلَمْتُ بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ﴾

“...layer upon layer of darkness...”³⁶¹

This is in contrast to the one who glorifies Allah, obeys Him and remains chaste. Such a person is given insight and can see things clearly, like the bird in full flight that flaps its wings seamlessly. This person sees the divine light,

﴿وَالْأَطْيَرُ صَفَّتْ كُلُّهَا صَلَاتُهُ وَتَسْبِيحُهُ﴾

“...as do the birds with wings outstretched? Each knows its prayer and glorification...”³⁶²

360 Al-Nūr: 39

361 Al-Nūr: 40

362 Al-Nūr: 41

The divine light has illuminated the face of the chaste believer,
the rays of its light almost snatch sight away,

﴿وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ﴾

*“The one to whom Allah gives no light has no light at all.”*³⁶³

The bird here is like the one flying in the divine heights of faith
as opposed to the one falling deep into the deep darkness of the
ocean,

﴿أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ﴾

*“Or like shadows in a deep sea covered by wave upon wave, with
clouds above – layer upon layer of darkness...”*³⁶⁴

Seeing opposites or disconnected words can help in making a
connection between verses.

2. *Sūrah Ṣād* & The Mountains and Birds

In *Sūrah Ṣād*, Allah mentions how the disbelievers rejected the
Prophet (ﷺ) and mocked him,

﴿وَقَالَ الْكَاذِبُونَ هَذَا سَجْرٌ كَذَابٌ﴾

*“...they say, ‘He is just a lying sorcerer.’”*³⁶⁵

363 Al-Nūr: 40

364 Ibid

365 Ṣād: 4

﴿مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا خَيْالٌ ۝٧﴾

“We did not hear any such claim in the last religion: it is all an invention.”³⁶⁶

﴿وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَنَا قِطْنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ۝١٦﴾

“They say, ‘Our Lord! Advance us our share of punishment before the Day of Reckoning!’”³⁶⁷

Allah says to the Prophet (ﷺ), consoling him,

﴿أَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَادْعُ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ۖ ذَا الْأَيْدِ ۚ إِنَّهُ وَأَوَّابٌ ۝١٧﴾
 ﴿وَاللَّيْلُ شَرٌّ وَأَصْبِرْ مَحْسُورًا ۚ كُلُّ لَهْ وَأَوَّابٍ ۝١٨﴾

“Bear their words patiently. Remember Our servant Dāwūd, a man of strength who always turned to Us: We made the mountains join him in glorifying Us at sunset and sunrise; and the birds, too, in flocks, all echoed his praise.”³⁶⁸

What is the connection between mountains and birds, and between the Prophet (ﷺ) being patient?

To understand the connection, we must first know the similarity between mountains and birds. Mountains are strong, heavy and firm, whereas birds are light and fast, this is the connection. To further clarify this, the noble and elevated position for the people

366 Ṣād: 7

367 Ṣād: 16

368 Ṣād: 17-19

of *tawhīd* requires patience upon *tawhīd* and call others to it. If the disbelievers are patient upon *shirk* and falsehood, taking pride in it and suffering because of it,

﴿إِنْ أَمْسُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَىٰ آلِهَتِكُمْ﴾

“... *Walk away! Stay faithful to your gods!*”³⁶⁹

The believers should be stronger and firmer in their belief, being proud of it and being patient upon it in all seven ways. One of those forms of patience is when the disbelievers harm and mock. Being patient upon this will result in people coming to your side. Do you not see how the strong, firm and imposing mountains were humbled before Dāwūd? Similarly, how the fast and nimble birds that are difficult to catch were also humbled for him. All echoed his praises by morning and evening,

﴿إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعُشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ ﴿١٩﴾﴾

“*We made the mountains join him in glorifying Us at sunset and sunrise; and the birds, too, in flocks, all echoed his praise.*”³⁷⁰

Is Allah not capable of making people respond to your call and message of *tawhīd*? People are weaker than mountains and slower than birds. He is able, but you must be patient. Seeing the similarity between mountains and birds helps to make the connection between verses.

369 Ṣād: 6

370 Ṣād: 18-19

3. *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd* & An Alive Heart

In *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd*, Allah rebukes the believers,

﴿الَّذِينَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ﴾

*“Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of Allah and the Truth that has been revealed...”*³⁷¹

Allah then says,

﴿أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا﴾

*“Remember that Allah revives the earth after it dies...”*³⁷²

What is the connection?

If we read the complete verse and ponder over it,

﴿أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلَ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ﴾

*“Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of Allah and the Truth that has been revealed, and not to be like those who received the Scripture before them, whose time was extended but whose hearts hardened...”*³⁷³

In this verse, Allah mentions two opposites; the soft heart and the hard heart. In the next verse, there are also two opposites; dead land and living land. We can then see the connection between

371 Al-Ḥadīd: 16

372 Al-Ḥadīd: 17

373 Al-Ḥadīd: 16

these two, that the dead heart is like the dead land, and the living heart is like the living land. Just as Allah brings dead land to life, so Allah can revive the dead heart. Therefore, a person should not despair or lose hope in Allah. If they turn back to Allah, repent, give charity and lend to Allah a good loan, they will be revived,

﴿اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا﴾³⁷⁴

“Remember that Allah revives the earth after it dies...”³⁷⁴

Thus, opposites in words and themes help to make a connection between verses.

374 Al-Ḥadīd: 17

Chapter Fifteen

Knowing the Wisdoms, Causes & Rulings

Knowing the wisdoms, causes and rulings of verses is from the most important ways that we recognise the link between verses. These verses may seem to be apparently different but are united by their same objective.

1. Marrying Polytheist Women & The Verse of Menstruation

Allah says,

﴿وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ﴾³⁷⁵

*“Do not marry idolatresses until they believe...”*³⁷⁵

375 Al-Baqarah: 221

Allah then says,

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ﴾

“They ask you about menstruation. Say, ‘Menstruation is a painful condition, so keep away from women during it. Do not approach them until they are cleansed...’”³⁷⁶

What is the connection?

The wisdom behind the prohibition of marrying idolatresses is due to their spiritual impurity as Allah mentions in *Sūrah al-Tawbah*,

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ﴾

“...those who ascribe partners to Allah are truly unclean...”³⁷⁷

This is the reason why marrying idolatresses is prohibited. To further clarify the harm of marrying idolatresses the question about menstruation is mentioned. Is this not also harmful?

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى﴾

“They ask you about menstruation. Say, ‘Menstruation is a painful condition...’”³⁷⁸

376 Al-Baqarah: 222

377 Al-Tawbah: 28

378 Al-Baqarah: 222

Menstruation blood is impure blood. A man is not allowed to have sexual relations with his wife during her menses due to the impurity of this blood. Is not the spiritual impurity of *shirk* graver than this? Spiritual impurity is worse and graver than physical impurity. Thus, by knowing the wisdom of each of the two issues we can see the link between them.

2. *Tawhīd* & Pure Food

In *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, Allah speaks about worshipping Him alone,

﴿وَالْهَكَمُ إِلَهُ وَحْدٌ﴾³⁷⁹

*“Your God is the One God...”*³⁷⁹

This verse is followed by one about the love the believers have for Allah,

﴿وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ﴾³⁸⁰

*“...but the believers have greater love for Allah.”*³⁸⁰

Allah then says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا﴾³⁸¹

*“O people, eat what is good and lawful from the earth...”*³⁸¹

379 Al-Baqarah: 163

380 Al-Baqarah: 165

381 Al-Baqarah: 168

What is the connection?

The connection is that *tawhīd*, loving Allah and being subservient to Him is the spiritual nourishment, just as pure food is physical nourishment. Thus, the link between the two is that both are types of nourishment.

3. The Confederates & The Special Status of the Prophet (ﷺ)

At the beginning of *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, Allah says,

﴿مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ ۖ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمْ الَّتِي تَنْظُرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ۚ﴾

“Allah does not put two hearts within a man’s breast. He does not turn the wives you reject and liken to your mothers’ back into your real mothers; nor does He make your adopted sons into real sons...”³⁸²

Allah then says,

﴿النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ ۚ﴾

“The Prophet is more protective towards the believers than they are themselves, while his wives are their mothers.”³⁸³

What is the connection between two hearts, likening wives to mothers and adoption as it relates to the status of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

Indeed, Allah has protected, purified, honoured and preserved

382 Al-Aḥzāb: 4

383 Al-Aḥzāb: 6

the Prophet (ﷺ) from every evil. He is the leader of the pious and prophets. He is the flag bearer of those who trust in Allah,

﴿وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ۝﴾

*“Put your trust in Allah: Allah is enough to trust.”*³⁸⁴

Allah only addresses him as ‘Prophet’ or ‘Messenger’, as he is Allah’s close friend. Allah mentions how pure the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ) is and how subservient to Him it is. The first way that it is mentioned is by stating that a person’s chest can only contain a single heart. There is no room in it for two hearts. Likewise, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) heart had only enough room for one close friendship, and that was Allah’s. No other person could compete with this friendship, irrespective of their status,

﴿مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّن قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ ۝﴾

*“Allah does not put two hearts within a man’s breast.”*³⁸⁵

Another example is then given about wives. A wife does not reach the status of motherhood for her husband as only one woman can have that position. Once again then, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) close friendship was reserved for Allah, no one else could share in this. Therefore, the status of the Prophet (ﷺ) is not a false claim, just as an adopted son does not become a real son, and a wife likened to a mother does not become the mother,

﴿وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمُ النِّسَى تَطْلِعُونَّ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ۝﴾

384 Al-Aḥzāb: 3

385 Al-Aḥzāb: 4

﴿وَمَا جَعَلَ أَرْوَاحَكُمْ الَّتِي تَظَاهِرُونَ مِنْهُمْ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ﴾

“...He does not turn the wives you reject and liken to your mothers’ back into your real mothers; nor does He make your adopted sons into real sons...”³⁸⁶

These are false claims. However, as it relates to the Prophet (ﷺ), then due to his position and noble status, he is like a father to the believers, and his wives are like their mothers. Allah has given to him prophethood and made him the best of the most determined of His messengers and their leader,

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ﴾

“We took a solemn pledge from the prophets – from you, from Nūḥ, from Ibrāhīm, from Mūsā, from ‘Īsā, son of Maryam...”³⁸⁷

Thus, by knowing the wisdom of every verse we can see the connection. That is that there is no body that contains two hearts, no wife who is a mother to her husband and no adopted son who takes the lineage of a real son.

386 Ibid

387 Al-Aḥzāb: 7

Chapter Sixteen

Knowing People's Natures & Circumstances

Speaking about something from afar is different than speaking about it up close and from personal experience. Therefore, someone who experiences the circumstances being spoken of in Qur'anic verses, will be better able to understand the connection between them.

1. *Sūrah al-Nisā'* & Greeting with the *Salām*

In *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, there are verses which encourage *jihād* and striving in Allah's cause,

﴿فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ﴾

“Let those of you who are willing to trade the life of this world for the life to come, fight in Allah's way...”³⁸⁸

388 Al-Nisā': 74

Allah then says,

﴿فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ﴾

“...When fighting was ordained for them...”³⁸⁹

Then comes the verse,

﴿فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ﴾

“So fight in Allah’s way. You are accountable only for yourself.”³⁹⁰

All of a sudden, there is then a change of topic,

﴿وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا﴾

“But when you are offered a greeting, respond with a better one, or at least return it...”³⁹¹

What is the connection?

When people experience excessive war and fighting, it hardens the heart, making people difficult and harsh to deal with. Such people are not soft in their approach and may not even greet you warmly. If you initiate the greeting, they may not respond, and if they do respond, it is with a dry and harsh reply. As such, there is little peace and safety in a society that experiences excessive fighting.

389 Al-Nisā’: 77

390 Al-Nisā’: 84

391 Al-Nisā’: 86

This is why Allah commands fighters to be good to others and to spread love and harmony amongst them, by helping others and making things easy for them. Allah says,

﴿مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفْعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا﴾³⁹²

*“Whoever speaks for a good cause will share in its benefits...”*³⁹²

They are encouraged to spread the *salāms* so as to extinguish the fire of killing, disunity, spilt blood, enmity and hardened hearts, that all emanates from killing another Muslim,

﴿وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا﴾³⁹³

*“But when you are offered a greeting, respond with a better one, or at least return it...”*³⁹³

Killing another Muslim is a major sin, as Allah then goes onto mention,

﴿وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا﴾³⁹⁴

*“If anyone kills a believer deliberately, the punishment for him is Hell, and there he will remain...”*³⁹⁴

At times, even greeting someone who is accustomed to fighting may not be enough. This is why Allah warns against transgression. Allah says,

392 Al-Nisā': 85

393 Al-Nisā': 86

394 Al-Nisā': 93

﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا﴾

“...and do not say to someone who offers you a greeting of peace, ‘You are not a believer,’...”³⁹⁵

Thus, whoever lives in such circumstances, interacts with soldiers and knows their nature, they are better able to see the connection between the verses of intercession and greetings alongside those of *jihād*.

2. The Story of Dāwūd & Goliath

After Allah mentions the story of the King Ṭālūt, and how the Prophet Dāwūd killed Goliath, Allah says,

﴿وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ﴾

“...Dāwūd killed Goliath, and Allah gave him sovereignty and wisdom and taught him what He pleased.”³⁹⁶

Allah then says to the Prophet (ﷺ),

﴿وَإِنَّا لَنَكْتُبُ لِمَنْ أَلْمُسْكِينِ ۖ تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ﴾

“...and you truly are one of the messengers. We favoured some of these messengers above others. Allah spoke to some; others He

395 Al-Nisā': 94

396 Al-Baqarah: 251

raised in rank. We gave 'Īsā, son of Maryam, Our clear signs and strengthened him with the holy spirit..."³⁹⁷

What is the connection?

Knowing human nature, we know that when someone's friends and contemporaries are praised, they think, 'What about me?' The Prophet (ﷺ) may have thought the same thing after hearing these verses about the kingdom of Dāwūd, at a time when the Prophet (ﷺ) doesn't have a similar kingdom. Allah responds, consoling the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ),

﴿تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ﴾

*"We favoured some of these messengers above others."*³⁹⁸

Allah therefore clarifies that He chose the Prophets, and made some better than others. He further selected from the prophets those to be messengers. Dāwūd was a Prophet, whereas you, are a Messenger and the leader of the messengers. Allah also selected some messengers to whom He spoke with and He raised others in rank closer to Him. Yet to some He gave specific miracles such as the holy spirit helping them.

For example, Allah honoured Mūsā by speaking to him. He raised Idrīs in ranks to the fourth heaven and made Ibrāhīm His close friend. To 'Īsā, He gave miracles such as bringing the dead to life, curing the blind and leper and strengthened him with the holy spirit. All of these examples are greater than the kingdom given to Dāwūd.

397 Al-Baqarah: 252-253

398 Al-Baqarah: 253

However, the Prophet (ﷺ) was given all of these honours. He spoke to Allah by the Lote Tree instead of the mountain. By reaching the Lote Tree he passed by ‘Īsā, Idrīs, Mūsā and Ibrāhīm, and thereby combining between speaking to Allah and being raised high in rank. Allah further favoured him with intercession, and gave him the unique station of closeness to Allah which surpasses the friendship of Ibrāhīm. The Prophet (ﷺ) was given miracles greater than all those received by the other prophets from Nūḥ to the ascension of ‘Īsā to heavens in body and spirit. During the Night Journey, the Prophet (ﷺ) ascended in body and spirit in the company of the holy spirit, Jibrīl to the seventh heaven, to the Lote Tree beneath Allah’s Throne by the Garden of Paradise.

Allah further honoured him with the assistance of Jibrīl on multiple occasions. Jibrīl accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) on the Night Journey. Rather, Jibrīl was by his side from the first moment of prophethood at the Cave of Ḥirā’, to protecting him from Quraysh by Allah’s permission, to being with him in the cave during the migration, to fighting alongside him in the battles of Badr, Uḥud, Khandaq, Qurayzah and Ḥunayn, to regularly bringing the Qur’an to him throughout his prophethood up until his final breath when he gave him the choice between this life and the next. Allah combined all these honours for the Prophet (ﷺ), as mentioned in the verse,

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

“...and you truly are one of the messengers. We favoured some of these messengers above others...”³⁹⁹

This comes after the verse about Dāwūd,

399 Al-Baqarah: 252-253

﴿وَأَتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ﴾⁴⁰⁰

“...and Allah gave him sovereignty and wisdom and taught him what He pleased.”⁴⁰⁰

Thus, by knowing and understanding people’s natures and their circumstances, you can make connections between Qur’anic verses with Allah’s permission.

3. *Sūrah al-Anbiyā’* & Dāwūd and Sulaymān

After mentioning the stories of Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ and Nūḥ in order and their success, Allah mentions the story of Dāwūd and Sulaymān with the farmers,

﴿وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفِثَ فِيهِمُ الْقَوَمُ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ شَهِيدِينَ ﴿٤٠١﴾ فَفَتَحْنَا لَهُمَا السُّلَيْمَانَ وَكُلاًّ آتَيْنَاهُمَا عِلْمًا﴾

“And remember Dāwūd and Sulaymān, when they gave judgement regarding the field into which sheep strayed by night and grazed. We witnessed their judgment and made Sulaymān understands better, though We gave sound judgement and knowledge to both of them...”⁴⁰¹

Why is this story mentioned in this context?

Anyone who is a parent or child may have noticed that Allah mentions Ibrāhīm before Nūḥ, even though the former is a descendant of the latter. Furthermore, Lūṭ is mentioned before

400 Al-Baqarah: 251

401 Al-Anbiyā’: 78-79

Nūḥ, even though Nūḥ is his ancestor and has a higher status than Lūṭ. This may make us question as to why they are mentioned before Nūḥ who is their ancestor and one of the great Messengers.

Allah mentions the story of Dāwūd and Sulaymān in response to this. This story is that two men entered upon the Prophet Dāwūd, one owns livestock and the other vegetation. The latter said that the former had allowed his grazing animals into my pasture and no plant survived. The Prophet Dāwūd judged that the man should take possession of all of the animals of his opponent.

Sulaymān said to his father, ‘I think other than this, O Prophet of Allah’. Dāwūd asked him to explain. Sulaymān opined that the two should swap farms. The one with the vegetation should take the animals and benefit from them, whereas the other should take the vegetable farm and replant it. When the vegetables regrow, each one can take back possession of their original farms. This is why Allah says,

﴿فَفَهَّمَهَا سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا﴾

“...and made Sulaymān understands better, though We gave sound judgement and knowledge to both of them.”⁴⁰²

Sometimes the son exceeds his father, for a wisdom known to Allah as Sulaymān surpassed his father in the above story. Likewise, Lūṭ is mentioned before Nūḥ due to a wisdom known by Allah, (this was further elaborated upon in chapter six). At times, Allah gives to the son knowledge and understanding more than the father, although both may be learned and knowledgeable, as we see with Dāwūd and his son Sulaymān,

402 Al-Anbiyā': 79

﴿فَفَهَّمَهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَاهُمْ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا﴾

“...and made Sulaymān understands better, though We gave sound judgement and knowledge to both of them.”⁴⁰³

Similarly, Ibrāhīm is mentioned before Nūḥ due to his position and status that was above all of the Prophets, except for our Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, whoever looks at the order of the stories in this chapter, and knows the relationship between a parent or grandparent with their children and grandchildren, may ask the question as to why the descendants are mentioned before their ancestors.

Completed by Allah’s grace in Ramadan 1436 AH.

403 Ibid

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